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THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND ART

BY

RALPH ADAMS CRAM

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

THE author of this powerful essay has accomplished three things. He has put before the reader a sketch of the process of art—especially architecturally—under the influence of the Catholic Church and of that Pagan antiquity in the maturity of which the Catholic Church arose. Next he has postulated or affirmed the effect of the faith in preserving and developing the expression of beauty. Lastly, and perhaps most valuable, he has asserted in a fashion more definite and critical than I can remember to have seen elsewhere the prime fact of our present chaos on the æsthetic side; to wit, that it has not only abandoned, but deliberately turned enemy to, beauty: that it is making in so-called art, and especially in architecture, for the deliberate cultivation of the hideous. He very rightly points out that in the story of *our* race (whatever may have been the case with baser perversions of mankind) this is a wholly new thing.

In the face of such a statement—and it is profoundly true in all its implications—there arises one main question in the mind of every thinking and instructed man: will the Faith save art, or is art doomed?

I say, "of every thinking and instructed" man, for people who use such terms as "the Churches" or "Christianity" in this connection are simply uninstructed. They do not know the past nor even the present. There are only two forces at work around us, one is the Catholic Church and the other is its opposite, the general negation of tradition and Christian laws.

Will the Catholic Church—I repeat the sentence—save the situation, or will our culture go down into the pit which yawns before it and over the edge of which much of it is already toppling?

Now before that question can be answered, or rather, before its alternative answers can be approached, we must begin by examining a point which the author himself has brought out very clearly; to wit, the fact that the Church since the dreadful catastrophe of the sixteenth century (which the irony of history has now finally labelled under the title of "The Reformation"), the Church has not vivified art. She has not been able apparently to invigorate the æsthetic effort of its members with that continuous spiritual vigour which created the glories of the Middle Ages. In Spain, as the author justly remarks, the breach with the past being less complete than elsewhere, a strong remnant of the old vitality survived and there is even some trace of it in the present day—like the last waters of a stream all the other branches of which have dried into the sand. But outside Spain, the Church, in architecture at least, for the most part sank into preservation at its best and, under the later shocks of exhaustion and revolution in European society, it sank into the sterilities (for the most part) of the eighteenth century, and the absurd futility of the nineteenth. Whether this be so true of the other arts as it is of architecture I should myself be inclined to doubt, but of architecture it is certainly true, and for that matter of nearly all the furniture of worship.

It has been repeatedly demanded what cause underlay this failure in Catholicism, when it had rallied from the first blast of anarchy in the early and mid-sixteenth century and was producing the great saints and theologians of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, to create an effect on art corresponding to the effect it had undoubtedly produced upon that which creates art, the human soul. For my part, I should answer, "The effect of the wound." If you shatter a man with a shell, stun him, maim him, and for the moment, as it were, destroy him, devoted medicine and nursing may bring him back to life and keep him in life, but he may well lose for a long period some one great active faculty which he possessed before the disaster. He may come out paralysed in this limb or in that. Now it seems to me that this was precisely what happened. The courage, the discipline, the energy, and above all the hope and confidence which are the marks of Faith, saved it from dissolution; but the shock had been delivered, and when the wounds were healed the scars remained. Moreover, in the shattered Europe which was all that remained spiritually after the upheaval, there was always present the effect and example of the anti-Catholic, anti-traditional, anti-corporate, schismatic part passing through its wild mutations from Calvinism to the breakdown of intelligence in our own day.

I am not, then (personally), very deeply concerned by the failure of Catholicism to restore (as yet) the æsthetic norm, though of course I deplore it as a grievous thing. With the full restoration of the Faith I am confident that the old and all-pervading impulse towards beauty will return. For truth and beauty are ultimately inseparable. But will that recovery of Europe by the Faith take place or not?

On that all depends, to that all questions in politics, as in æsthetics, in every department of human life return. There are, it would seem, three possibilities, and since no man can know the future, we can only state them.

The first is the extinction of Catholicism, temporally speaking from amongst us: its extirpation. That the Faith can be wholly destroyed we of the Faith know to be impossible. It must endure to the end of time, partaking as it does of the life of God Incarnate, and having Him present in its midst. But I use the word "extirpation" in the sense in which it may be used of England between the destruction of the crown by the aristocracy in 1688 and the very partial and limited revival of Catholicism in the nineteenth century. We can all conceive a world in which a Catholic community should survive, but so small in numbers, of so little economic power, so ignored by all around it, that our culture as a whole might be said to have lost that influence by which it was made.

Should this of the three alternatives be our fate, why, then all civilisation is doomed, and the doom of art is but one department of the general ruin. The modern fever of ugliness and filth is ephemeral of its nature, it must soon burn itself out, but if that of which it is the symbol conquers, then we fall back very rapidly to barbarism. It may be that in this barbarism some wretched relics of the cult of the Midias will survive, as they do among African savages, but art in the sense that men of our race have given to that word from the beginnings of our culture will disappear, with letters, with organised reasoning, with detailed law, and everything else proper to a high culture.

The second alternative is the converse of this. There may be a general recovery of our world by the Faith. Should this take place, the situation is saved, and art with the rest. The thing is not impossible because the process appears to be lengthy, the effort has behind it pretty well all that is alive of respectable reasoning power in our time, most of its enthusiasm and a great measure even of its organising capacity. All must remark the driving force of the Catholic argument in the modern world even though all remark it side by side with its inability to affect as yet the declining mass of humanity about us.

There is a third alternative. It is that of the Faith surviving in a community—perhaps large, perhaps the greater half, but still in a community segregated. In other words, the third alternative is the possibility of that rupture in our system proceeding to its conclusion, and Christendom, which has maintained a sort of relic of unity in spite of its schisms, having been confirmed for so long, may abandon unity altogether, and then split up into a Catholic and a non-Catholic world which shall be as much opposed as Catholic and Mohammedan. If such is to be our fate, even so the restoration of the æsthetic norm will be achieved within the Catholic boundaries. But one thing would seem to be certain: we cannot change the effect until we change the cause. We cannot restore great art in connexion with religion until we have put religion back upon its throne. It is indeed true that the lack of training has much to do with the present trouble, the absence of schools, and that the presence of such, the organisation of many such centres, would be an excellent temporal work of mercy; but you will never get that unity or that vitality which are the twin marks of the Christian æsthetic until the Faith be politically vigorous and free and, once more sufficiently established and of social, organic and universal might.—*The Editor*.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND ART

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CHAPTER I

The anomalous events of the last hundred years have so confused both issues and terminology that it is impossible to consider so simple a question as the relationship of the Catholic Church to the body of Christian art without an attempt, if not to clarify the situation, at least to establish a few necessary premises.

What, as a matter of fact, we confront to-day, is a new estimate of æsthetic values, a new solution of the mystery of beauty (for mystery it is), and a corpus of new dogmas on the nature and function of art. Whether it is right or wrong, this new evangel, it certainly bears no closer relationship to the ideas and aims of the historic past, than holds in the case of the products fabricated under its influence in comparison with all preceding art. The word "beauty" is ostracised and in its place is offered "significant form"; the highly superior and even at times supercilious intelligentsia of the domain of æsthetics, rejecting the idea of the existence of any standard of values apart from the personal equation (a doctrine that the unkind might say comes back in the end to "I don't know much about art, but I know what I like"), doubt the existence of the absolute, and, it would appear, deny any *essential* difference between the frieze of the Parthenon and a "comic strip" in a popular newspaper, or between Bourges Cathedral and a modernist apartment house in the Boulevard Raspail or the abortive Church of the Holy Family in Barcelona. It has been said with gravity that "an onion painted by Cézanne, is worth all the Madonnas of Raphael." The words "art" and "artist" have a new but mutable connotation, while "truth," "the ideal," and "emotion" are similarly discarded as no longer representing anything in the realm of reality (I am not sure that even this is considered as a factor in life); and, as a whole, the old terminology, even when it is retained for lack of a sufficiently ingenious and mystifying substitute, is given a new content and so becomes, not an agency for the clarifying and expression of ideas, but, as was said of old, a method of concealing them. There are those who maintain that the ideas themselves do not exist, hence the practical usefulness of the new method.

The visible or audible results that follow in time and space from this new ideology are logical and consistent, whether they occur in the domain of painting, sculpture, architecture, music or poetry. In no respect, however, has the Catholic Church had any part in their production, nor do they, or can they, function within her orbit, therefore there is no reason for dealing with them here; the only point is that we cannot approach the subject under consideration unless for the moment, and if only as an historical or archæological adventure, we put aside these novelties of speculation and, reverting to the definite ideas that held during the historic period down to about a quarter century ago, accept them as our necessary premises, adopting their definitions and phraseology, and giving full credit to their products.

The search for beauty and the creation of beauty through art has always been a prepossession of humanity from the time of the Magdalenian Man, whenever that may have been. The quality of its achievement and the nature of its manifestation have varied widely, the genius of a culture has from time to time expressed itself through one art rather than another, while occasionally a culture has reached so high a point that nearly all the arts have flourished simultaneously on an abnormally lofty plane. Within the historic period, that is to say, the last six thousand years, there has been no manifestation of a definite evolutionary process. When art appears amongst a people it usually reaches about its highest point in a century, thereafter fluctuating for a time, with periods of depression followed by recovery, until at last, after about another two hundred years, it declines and finally corrupts, disappearing only to give place after a fallow period (paralleled by the generating culture itself) to another sudden emergence of creative power that lasts no longer and achieves the same destiny. Art of the highest, and in one form or another, has shown itself in antiquity in Egypt, Babylonia, China, Greece, the Levant, Central America, and in more recent times in nearly every part of Christian Europe, Moorish Spain and Buddhist Japan. In its inception it is always associated with the religious impulse, finding in the service of formal and organised religion its greatest opportunity and its most ardent support, though it always in time extends itself into the secular sphere. There have been but two periods when it suffered a temporary but almost complete eclipse: the Dark Ages of Western Europe, between the years A.D. 500 and 1000 (barring the Carolingian interim, Ireland and the Spanish Caliphates) and the last century, dating from about 1830, with the exception of the arts of music and poetry which flourished for the first half of that period and architecture which during the last half has shown a surprising and even unaccountable rejuvenation in America. At no time in history has there been a conscious turning to, and searching for, and creation of ugliness in place of beauty, except amongst the negro tribes of Central Africa and in Western Europe during the last quarter-century.

For myself I see some significance in this. The perception of beauty synchronizes with the appearance of a crescent culture. The "art" of the Congo, recently so much admired, marks no culture, crescent or otherwise, and is simply totemism. If it were conceivable that some African tribe were to receive some sudden accession of élan vital and proceed towards an active cultural development, then the raw and grotesque effigies now serving their purpose as totems might also become the point of departure for the development of true art, though in themselves, and minus this vitalizing energy, they are its negation, and are the concrete expression of essential ugliness. The source of this reversal of artistic values, of this contradiction of beauty, lies in the survival of human enclaves of pre-cultural stock. Undoubtedly this same totemism existed prior to the emergence of Neolithic, or even earlier man, and it was only this "catastrophic" energising that happened, so to speak, in a day, some five or six thousand years ago, that started him on his career of headlong development that in a few centuries achieved its goal, by swift mutations transforming the cave man into homo sapiens, and giving him the power to transmute his brutal totems into creative art.

Or, though the matter is not essential to our inquiry, it may be that these Congo products, whether of sculpture or so-called music, instead of being the result of a survival of pre-cultural man, may be the manifestations of degeneration, or reversion to type, since it is increasingly apparent that if evolution is a law of life, devolution is its inseparable concomitant and that nothing, not even human society, rises, or may rise, that shall not fall again.

Is this the explanation of the second phenomenon to which I have referred, the apparent deliberate choice of ugliness in place of beauty that has shown itself in several of the arts during the last twenty-five years? I mean an unconscious reversion to type following the decadence of a civilization that, having reached its allotted height of development, now prepares itself to yield place to another as yet only in its most rudimentary stage of emergence into the light. Or is it, on the other hand, the natural result of that wide revolution in society that, first showing itself in the early sixteenth century, has gone on with crescent force and with an ever-widening orbit, until it now involves the whole of life and is its determining spirit? I mean that theory and that practice we call democracy, which implies the abandonment of any clear distinction between standards of value, of choice, of selection, with the better as object rather than the less good, and in effect nourishes quantitative in place of qualitative standards. It is an experiment that never has been tried before, and there is an increasing suspicion that its results, to date, are not convincing, or even encouraging. Coincidence or consequence, art in nearly all its forms has taken on a colouration sensitively sympathetic with the new social dispensation, and an interesting parallel might be drawn between modern art, from Impressionism through all its curious and surprising manifestations, down to jazz and the latest French architectural aberrations, and parliamentary government, social Bolshevism and pragmatic philosophy.

Whatever the explanation, the results are unmistakable. For the first time in history the "modern" artist pursues and accomplishes ugliness, and in extenuation asserts that there is no such thing as beauty in any sense that permits of definition and maintains through the ages continuity and substantial identity. That he, the modernist artist, has discredited, if he has not yet wholly destroyed, the stale and sterile formulæ of Victorian art, is certainly true, and we owe him much for this. His success amounts almost to a revolution, but in one essential respect it differs from all other antecedent revolutions and finds its fellow only in the recent social and political revolution in Russia. In the past an old system was overthrown because certain individuals or groups already had formulated another, and in order to establish their new order the old had to be destroyed. In the case both of modern art and Bolshevism, the old was assailed because it seemed to some that it was bad, and therefore had to go. This laudable act accomplished, the workers of revolution found themselves in an embarrassing position since they really had nothing valid to offer in its place. One after another new devices were brought forward only to be in turn discarded, and now after twenty years of vertiginous effort to discover or create a new political and social formula, or a new art, we are further from success than ever.

In this novel type of revolution, whether it is social, political or æsthetic, the Catholic Church has played no part—which is also in itself an anomalous state of things. From Constantine to the Council of Trent, the Church was in the forefront of all social and cultural movements of every kind. It was the Great Energy, informing society, influencing individual development, uniting peoples, creating a supra-national State. To-day, apart from valiant efforts in the industrial category, it stands aloof, and as an organism its influence is negative rather than positive. The Reformation, acting its allotted part as the greatest centrifugal force in history, shattered the spiritual unity of Europe, engendered an acute nationalism, and brought in a new type of society in which the spiritual influence of religion ceased to function as the primary directive force. Rather suddenly it fell back to a subordinate position while material and intellectual impulses took its place. Whether this was the result of an evolutionary progress from lower to higher things, or the reverse, is not the question. What is of moment is that for the first time an age-long energy ceased to operate, and for one result we find art of every kind becoming a series of personal reactions to stimuli, not the more or less unconscious expression, through highly personalized channels, it is true, of a sort of universal spiritual energy that was implicit in life itself, and far above the achievement, even the comprehension, of the individual. Enter the "artist" as such; no longer the good craftsman sensitive to the mystical effluvia of aspiration, exaltation, the quest of holiness of his own people in their own time, but the self-centred, introspective, egocentric individual, driven insistently to express not that which was beyond and above himself, but—simply and frankly—himself.

All of which is perfectly logical since it is quite consonant with the spirit of the age. The present era is technological, experimental and individualistic, and what it offers as art naturally partakes of these qualities. "Modernism," in its ugliness as well as in its other qualities—perhaps here more than elsewhere—quite accurately expresses the spirit of the age. We do not find fault with it on this score, but because it does not discriminate between the new things that need new expression, the things that are perhaps evanescent, almost accidental, and the old things that are eternal and are alien to these new days. Amongst these is certainly religion in its traditional forms. Not the religion of a kaleidoscopic Protestantism, incessantly changing its shape, but that of a Catholicism which in its essentials is changeless, however adaptable it may be in the matter of inessentials. The same is true of other real elements in society, e.g. education and the home. Here there is indeed a sufficient surrender to modernism but it is not universal. Underneath the very patent show of a very modernized life there still survive the old ideals and motives of earlier days, and to these the "new art," as well as the pragmatic philosophy, is definitely inapplicable. The present is a time of artistic eclecticism and opportunism, as it is in philosophy and religion, and one would not have it otherwise if this were possible, which it is not. The gropings and the many inventions of the modernist must continue until a footing is found on a revaluation of values, or the issue is determined in another of those periodical lapses into degeneration and temporary oblivion which are the chapter endings of world history. Meanwhile the other, the traditional, the historical, philosophy of life, the old principles and ideals of art, the old, persistent ways of religion must maintain themselves in their integrity, for the time always comes when they must emerge from their hidden sanctuaries to act as the purifying force of the inevitable new age.

This is precisely what Catholicism has done, once in the first millennium of Christianity, once in the second; it is not without the range of possibility that it is preparing to do the same in the third. As after the Barbarian Invasions and the fall of the Western Empire it brought civilisation with its resulting culture and therefore its art to life again in the West; as after the second Dark Ages of the ninth and tenth centuries it inspired and organised the great recovery of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, so it very well may continue its destiny, once the present century is past, lightening the twenty-first century with another and an equal glory.

I am trying to make the point, perhaps through many byways, that in dealing with the question of the Catholic Church and Art, it is neither possible nor reasonable to accept the æsthetic theories and nomenclature of the moment. "Art" from the time of Constantine to that of Edward I of England, meant a very different thing to what it means to-day to the most admired expositors. This period of nearly a thousand years was that within which the Catholic religion was re-forming art and giving it a content new in some respects, richer in all. If, then, I use the words beauty, the ideal, emotion, as without apology I propose to do, I use them in the sense in which they were employed in this period; if I assume that there is an essential difference between beauty and ugliness, and that there are certain fixed standards of value and such a thing as absolute beauty, as again without apology I propose to do; if finally I take it for granted that art, which is the visible manifestation and to a certain degree the creation and isolation of beauty, is in its highest aspect the expression of emotions and aspirations so high in character that they admit of no other voicing, I do so because these, during the period under review, were held to be self-evident facts, and therefore they must be assumed as a necessary premise to any study of the case.

CHAPTER II

It would perhaps be more exact to call this essay "The Catholic Faith and Art," since, in its function as an organism, the Catholic Church has concerned itself directly with art only to a minor degree. Councils and synods have found their concern in other and more obvious duties and considerations. Only in most recent years have Popes or other members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy issued admonitions or instructions in æsthetic matters, while it has been left to secular, and generally infidel philosophers to essay a definition of beauty and of art and to analyse the methods of artistic operation. Beauty was recognised as the best that could be seen, heard, or created, art as the best way of doing a beautiful thing. Beauty was gratefully accepted as a very special gift of God, and art was fostered because it somehow, and mysteriously, glorified material things so that they seemed less unworthy to offer to God, and because it furnished a new and eloquent language for the expression and communication of spiritual truths, and was vastly useful in spreading and enforcing the Catholic faith. Art was not a thing apart, in a category by itself, it was a necessary part of life, a thing accepted as instinctively as eating and sleeping, fighting and love. It belonged to everybody, a sort of "natural right"—more solidly based and more easily defended as such than some other devices that have borne the name in later times. There was no such thing as an "artist" in the modern sense of the term; the creators of the architecture, painting, sculpture of the Christian centuries were good craftsmen with the universal innate sense of beauty, a more or less unconscious apprehension of spiritual values and a capacity for expressing them symbolically superior to that possessed by their fellows. William of Volpiano and Abbot Suger and William of Wykeham were just as good architects as Eudes of Montreuil or William of Sens or Juan Gil de Hontañon; the Van Eycks accepted a contract to paint the statues on a town hall as cheerfully as an order for an altar piece, and Cimabue wrought a majestas as instinctively as his successor to-day turns out the cover for a popular magazine, an advertisement of an automobile, or a piece of "still life." As Christian art was one of the greatest of arts it was for a thousand years almost without self-consciousness, and the Church accepted and used it—and therefore fostered it—in the same sense.

Of course, as we shall see, with the Renaissance all this was changed and from the fifteenth century on we have the modern era (not of course "modernism"), but up to then art was simply doing things beautifully and therefore as well as possible, and the Church as an organic entity concerned itself no more with the theory and the philosophy of art, or with its furtherance as an independent profession, than it did with the theory and practice and furtherance of any other essential factor of human life.

The relationship of Catholicism—the religion and philosophy and way of life—to art is a very different matter. Here we find so close a linking that to all intents the two almost become one. For fifteen centuries Christianity and Catholicism were synonymous terms, for the schism of the Eastern Patriarchates effected only a severance of administrations; the religion, except in point of a few dogmatic details, remained the same. From the date of the emancipation of the Church under Constantine, A.D. 311, the Catholic religion took over the existing arts, smote them into its very body and soul, and began its great work of transforming them into its own spiritual image. What it did was to accept the arts as they then stood, give them a new content, give them little by little new and ever-changing forms, give them finally a new work to do in that they became almost sacramental in character and were called upon to play their part in the symbolical expression of the loftiest and most tenuous spiritual values, and the communication of these amongst men.

The transformation in *character* was revolutionary. Hitherto in the art of Egypt and of Greece beauty in line and form, together with the sacrificial factor of laborious and perfect manual craftsmanship, had been used, when employed for religious ends, to express symbolically the majesty and the superhuman quality of the high gods and their celestial regimen. The appeal was in a way intellectual rather than emotional, the art expressive rather than evocative. Now, under the vitalising influence of the Catholic sacramental system, the quality that, in its relationship to man, distinguished the Christian religion from all others more than in any other instance, the arts absolutely changed their character, or rather added an entirely new function to those they already possessed. Pure beauty, the beauty of a Greek vase or statue, was no longer so passionately sought, nor, at first, was perfection of workmanship so essential a desideratum. Already out of the East had come to Imperial Rome, and especially to Alexandria and Antioch, colour, and perhaps also the beginnings of a new music with all they implied of direct emotional appeal. With them came their concomitant, mysticism, the transcending of the intellectual measure and the test of rational experience, by a higher power of assent. Hitherto, the West had been controlled by mind and will, the true land of reason and age of reason, and *form* was the inevitable and perfect expression of this quality. The East, on the other hand, Asia with its highest development in Persia, and adjacent lands impinging on the frontiers of the Roman Empire, was the land of emotion, mystical and transcendental in its spirit, amorphous in form and method. Its natural expression was through colour, including shadow and darkness, and their contrast with ever-contending light. At first these æsthetic qualities out of the Orient assumed a dominance over the exquisite and perfect form of the West, and naturally; for the religion that seized upon and used them was a religion of spiritual, of transcendental values, and the intellectual form of pagan art could not, of its very nature, operate adequately for expression or evocation. Presently, as we shall see, much of pure form was recovered and in the end the two spirits of West and East achieved a complete synthesis, the result being the perfected art-expression of Christianity in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

There is no more fascinating study than this of the consistent weaving of a new vesture for the Catholic Faith out of the indestructible warp and woof of an elder art: the change and enrichment of an old language to fit new concepts and give them to the world. In a brief treatise such as this it is possible only to touch on the high spots for the process lasted over a period of nearly a thousand years, involving the work of many races, and showing itself in every one of the many arts of man. Beginning in Syria, Anatolia and Armenia it moved westward through Byzantium to Italy, then by diverging roads into Spain, France and Rhineland until it reached its term in Ireland, England, Scandinavia and Russia. Inherited artistic tradition and the vestiges of old centuries, the bent of racial stocks, climatic conditions and material circumstances all played their part in the great transformation, while social, economic, commercial and political evolution were working always as a constant and conditioning influence. Over all and through all, however, was the energising and directing force of the Catholic religion and, while the *forms* of the arts were taking shape largely as the result of the operation of the above named forces, it was the universal religion that was determining the content, the indwelling spirit, and inevitably moulding material elements to its will. There is no more an "economic basis" for the growth and determination of Christian art than there is for human history. This is one element, but one only, and that by no means the most important. Christian art from Constantine to Lorenzo de' Medici is so exactly the child and the counterpart of the Catholic religion in its various vicissitudes that it is almost true to say that it is a coördinate and indispensable part thereof. Whatever has been, whatever we have to-day (an infinitesimal part of the whole vast product), is the creation of the Catholic Faith, Protestantism has added nothing; during the four centuries of its existence it has made no smallest contribution to the great body of Christian art, in architecture, painting, sculpture, liturgics or the artist-crafts. In music there has indeed been a great development since the sixteenth century, chiefly along secular lines, though Catholic masters such as Bach and Beethoven have made their immortal contribution to the art and some of this has been taken over by Protestantism to serve its own ends. It has done the same thing in the case of all the other arts. Until the last fifty years Protestantism has been a purely destructive force so far as religious art is concerned. Together with the proletarian revolutions that have marked each century since the sixteenth century and the corrupt Renaissance energies in the eighteenth century, it is responsible for the wide and ruthless destruction that has left us but a tithe of the supreme works of the Christian thousand years; and now, with the sudden development of a new desire for beauty on the part of the Protestant sects, they are forced to have recourse to the Catholic art they once did their best to exterminate and sweep away from the earth; a condition not without its element of irony.

I have spoken already of the sacramental element in Catholicism as one of the determining factors in the transformation of art; that vital principle of the linking in unity of the material and spiritual (microcosm of life itself), the using of sacramental quality in much more than the seven formal sacraments, and the using of these "sacramentals," of which art in all its forms was and is perhaps the most important, for the expression and communication of spiritual energy. There is another factor in the Christian religion and philosophy which was almost equally potent in the vital process of creating Christian art, and that is the principle of *contest* between the spiritual and the material, that is to say, the everlasting struggle of spirit to accomplish the redemption of matter. Now Christian art, until very recent times, sought and glorified beauty wherever found, and created it wherever possible, but rather because of human joy in beauty and as an approximation to the ever-present ideal than for any mystical or transcendental motive. It was content with beauty as such. Christianity proclaimed the eternal struggle of the higher to overcome the lower and all of its art proclaims this contest. To take a single illustration from architecture, the Greeks accepted the simplest possible structural unit and the least highly articulated organic system and then perfected every detail in this primitive norm until a limit had been reached beyond which there was no conceivable betterment. A Greek temple, like the statue of a Greek athlete, is finally perfect, but it is also definitely static. Ideal form has been achieved. A Christian church, however, whether Byzantine, Romanesque or Gothic, is, from the Greek point of view, defective to a degree since it is in a state of flux; it is manifestly a very inadequate approximation to the ideal in the minds of its creators. Here the most complicated schemes of building were devised, physical laws were defied and in a measure overcome; through ten centuries every master builder and every other artist allied with him was striving towards the attainment of a far ideal that was beyond his power of achievement. Hence the feeling one gains from all works of essentially Christian art, of struggle, of outstretching, of passionate aspiration, not only in architecture but in all other arts as well. The supreme calm, the "nothing too much" of the Greek, the self-sufficient majesty of the Egyptian, are wholly absent; therefore Christian art is dynamic, always moving, without repose.

So long as this religion was both vigorous and pervasive, the art it transformed was never at rest. Style followed style, one merging into another in the never-ending search for the attainment of the undefined by uncomprehended and ever-changing roads. The only parallel to the ceaseless and creative activity that showed itself in the evolution of Christian Art from the sixth to the sixteenth century is our contemporary technological development, but while there is similarity in nature there is diversity in impulse and motive. To-day we use the intellect and the fruits of the intellect for the attainment of material ends; then they strove by the use of the sensuous to achieve the supersensuous.

CHAPTER III

The transformation of the pagan art of the Roman Empire was the result of no sudden and drastic process. Until the Edict of Constantine, A.D. 311, Christianity was a hidden religion, persecuted and despised and its art was no more than illustrative or symbolical pictures and rough carvings in catacombs or secret shrines associated with the burial of martyrs. The old myths of Orpheus, of Amor and Psyche, etc., are used over again but with a new content; scenes from the Old and New Testaments are crudely drawn and after the contemporary Roman fashion; Christian and pagan ideas mingle in a curiously friendly manner. Symbols of the most obvious sort such as the cross, anchor, fish and star, are universally employed, and everywhere, linked with the Crucifixion and the Good Shepherd are the evidences of the veneration of the Mother of God, the intercession of the Saints, and prayers for the repose of the souls of the dead.

Already in the last years of the Empire, the East has been carrying on its irresistible process of interpenetrating the West. Colour in the shape of mosaics and enamels has greatly enriched the decadent classic architecture taken over from

Greece, just as its strange and mystical and religious cults have begun to supersede the earlier and traditional faith. With the liberation of the Church this Oriental factor will operate as one of the two great forces out of the union of which will grow, by slow degrees, the full expression of the Catholic Faith, but here in the catacombs there is little opportunity for anything except the simplest symbolism—in itself more Eastern than Western in its nature.

Under the sudden and unexpected imperial favour there comes a swift change, indeed a dazzling transformation. No longer harried to their holes, the Christians, blinking in the full daylight, find themselves blessed with affluence not only of patronage but of material wealth. Courtiers hurry to link themselves with the religion now under the imperial favour; the Church, no longer under the ban, is forced to make itself more august and respectable through enrichment of its ceremonial, its vestments and its art. Constantine himself builds churches great and small through his wide Empire and both devotees and sycophants follow suit. A whole new art has to be built up without delay, and it is so built up at the hands of many races and under the influence of the most varied traditions and environments.

In this earliest Constantinian work there is at first little divergence from the Imperial mode. The basilica or public hall, a square room divided into three aisles by two rows of columns, with, perhaps, a semi-circular apse at one end, becomes the standard architectural type for churches. This became the regular Western mode down to the London churches of Christopher Wren. Later it was to strive for supremacy against the Eastern domical or centralised form, equilibrium at last being achieved through an organic union of the two modes. Old temples, baths and palaces are levied on for their marble columns, the mosaics of the walls show forth the Old Testament history and the Gospel story, and the Eucharistic vestments are made of rich stuffs splendid with embroidery. In the representation of persons and scenes the realism of the later Roman art gives place to an hieratic treatment with the object of lifting the religious subjects above the plane of common life. Sensible beauty gives place to emotional suggestion, but the elements of rhythm and space composition still remain, and the mosaics and ivories achieve their own beauty which is yet quite different from that of the Greeks.

It is now that the great process of building up a body of art-expression for the established Catholic Faith, finds its inception. It is doubtful if the problem was ever consciously formulated; for so great and significant an art as the first of the Christian world could hardly have been evolved by conscious mental processes. The problem was this. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit Catholic dogma and philosophy were being forged by bishops and councils. The cold, clear, intellectual method of the West, the Pauline contribution, was meeting and mingling with the spiritual, mystic, emotional elements contributed by the East. Constantinople, now the Imperial city, was the bridge and the meeting place. Had the divine provenance been withdrawn and the fate of the Church left entirely in Western hands or entirely in those of the East, the new religion would never have become Catholic; for in the one case it would have hardened into a formal, stereotyped philosophy without spiritual energy, aloof from man and his clamouring needs (as was to happen later under John Calvin), or in the other it would have become vague, amorphous, fantastic in its symbolism and declining in the end upon magic and thaumaturgy. The union of the form and colour of East and West resulted in the final and perfect unity that is Catholicism, the first and the only religion that assembles in one all truths in perfect balance and coöperation.

This meant, as of necessity, an art measurably new and possessed of the same qualities that marked the perfected religion and its consequent philosophy. The process began at once and of course in those lands where the two factors impinged, that is to say, the eastern shores of the Mediterranean from Alexandria north through Syria to Anatolia and so to Constantinople. Here, providentially, was already a predominant Greek stock with something of the inherited traditions of Hellenism; so far as form was concerned, therefore, something purer than the now degenerate form of Roman imperialism was ready to act with the emotional quality that drove westward from Persia and Mesopotamia. It would almost seem that here in Syria, half hidden now by desert sand, are the ruins of the very churches that furnish the prototypes not only for the consummate flowering of Byzantine art in Hagia Sophia, but also for so much of the Romanesque development in Western Europe so many centuries later.

Here were three great schools of architecture, counting from north to south, which seem to contain more of the elements of Mediæval art than are to be found elsewhere. It is from Syria, apparently, that Diocletian drew the builders of his amazing palace at Spalato, and that Justinian found those who were to develop for him the magnificent building of his reign. In the south were the curious structures, wholly of stone, that de Vogue has so carefully studied, with their piers instead of columns, their close-set transverse nave and aisle arches carrying roofs of stone slabs, and their arch abutments precisely like those we find centuries later at Sant' Ambrogio, Milan. Here also we find as at Zor-ah, the primitive domical churches, polygonal in plan, set within a square, and with absidioles in the angles, that are the prototypes of San Vitale and Aix-la-Chapelle. In the middle school, the closely built piers of the south give place to very wide spacing, with broad round arches and low clerestories of narrow windows. The aisles are vaulted in stone, the roofs are of wood. Here also we discover the norm of the great flanking towers of the west ends of Norman and Gothic abbeys and cathedrals, though at first they are low and rise but little above the roof levels. The complete parallel that exists between the exterior architectural treatment of these churches and that of the twelfth century Romanesque work of southern France, is startling. Columns are used on the apses and chapels precisely as they are employed there, and with the arched corbel table form the prototype of the pilaster strips and cornices of Lombardy and the Rhine. In the north columns, once more, are generally used as supports; there are three apses, instead of one, and these, curiously enough, are often square in plan, even the main sanctuary, like the early British church that fixed the permanent type of square-ended plan in England. Another singular innovation is the lift-

> ing of the side chapels into towers of several stories framing in the apse; a device which appears later at Como and goes thence to the Rhineland, where it becomes a characteristic and entirely local feature. In this northern school the feeling is predominantly Greek, in form as well as in decoration. The carved ornament is crisp and clean, and merges rapidly into the intricate and brilliant patterning of Byzantine art.[1]

What the great church of Antioch, "the Golden House," may have been we can never know, except by analogy, but Justinian's immortal masterpiece still stands; and in Hagia Sophia, as well as in other desecrated churches in Constantinople, we see how triumphant in the end was the effort at building a Catholic art for the Catholic faith. The East contributed the centralised scheme with its vast dome, but it was two Greek architects who perfected the articulation of the whole fabric, while it was the Catholic religion that infused the masterly creation with that Christian spirit that even now withstands the whitewash and the desecrations of the Moslems. Its golden and jewelled altars and shrines, its silver screens and myriad ornaments have vanished and its golden mosaics are painted over, but it still remains one of the perfect buildings of the world and the triumphant exposition of the crescent Catholic Faith. The union of form and colour, of East and West, is here completely achieved and an art has come into being which is fitting, expressive and adequate to its ends. The last vestige of pagan art has disappeared and the Catholic Church now stands explicit and eloquent and definitive before the eyes of men.

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[1] *The Substance of Gothic,* by R. A. Cram.

As I have already suggested, it is doubtful if the Church, as such, had very much, consciously, to do with this amazing result. Hagia Sophia was built by the Emperor Justinian in avowed emulation of Solomon. The master builders were two Greeks from Anatolia whose names alone remain to us—Anthemius of Tralles and Isidorus of Miletus. What had happened was that there was a new creative impulse abroad. It was in the air and it precipitated itself in visible form through the agency of artists and craftsmen as it did in other fields through philosophers and theologians. Justinian wanted the most glorious church in the world (and got it); his architects were more than willing to humour him, but I suspect they worked more than half unconsciously and were as much surprised as he (and successive generations) at what they had wrought. This is the difference between creative and created art. The former, the great art, that for example of Greece, Byzantium and the Middle Ages, comes because it has to, without theorising and without a definite objective on the part of the artist. The latter, the lesser art, as of the Renaissance and modernism, is personal and self-conscious, the work of men who have evolved a theory on *a priori* grounds, and set to work to produce a pre-determined result by perfectly logical methods. The Catholic religion was now implicit in the atmosphere of what had once been the Roman Empire and by its very energy, the compulsion of its nature, it became, and without definitely conscious human intervention, explicit in the organic Catholic Church on the one hand, in the Catholic art of Byzantium on the other.

From the shores of the Bosporus this now perfected art came to Western Europe through Ravenna, Venice and Aix-la-Chapelle. In the East the domical, centralized form of church had become firmly fixed and the basilica had lost out. In Ravenna the contest was renewed, and here we find side by side basilicas such as the churches of Sant' Apollinare and the polygonal domed San Vitale with its Byzantine absidioles and tribunes. The question for the West is still open, so far as the church plan is concerned, but elsewhere there is unanimity. Mosaics, ivories, carvings are purely Byzantine, formalized, non-realistic, symbolical and hieratic. The curious Oriental episode of the iconoclasts has obliterated all sculpture models so far as the human figure is concerned, except for bas-reliefs in ivory, or metal and enamel, and this is now to be built up for the Catholic Church, and, naturally along the lines of the ivory carvings, just as painting, when it comes, will be based on the precedent of mosaics and miniatures.

It was a very great style, this which was the result of the union of Hellenism and Orientalism under the inspiration of the Catholic Faith and polity. It might, had history wrought otherwise, have served as the complete exposition of the Christian religion, going on to further developments and achieving new glories, though this is hard to imagine so perfect had it become in its high estate. As a matter of fact it did hold, down even to the Mediæval period in Greece and Macedonia, in Venetia and Asia Minor, though without any marked advance in organic system or in æsthetic expression, hardening, rather, and becoming stereotyped. What might have happened in the West is an unsolvable problem because certain things occurred which brought an entirely new set of factors into play, with revolutionary and astonishing, if in the end highly gratifying, results.

The first Dark Ages of the West, following the fall of Rome, were broken by the "false dawn" of the Carolingian era, during which the artistic energy of Byzantium entered central Europe through the court of Charlemagne. There was, of course, a sudden burst of artistic activity, with a new stress on metal work, an artist-craft that hitherto had not received as much attention as many of the others. In Ireland illumination reached extraordinary heights of perfection, while of course in Moorish Spain many arts flourished as well as sciences. In Christian Europe, however, the Dark Ages returned after the death of Louis le Debonnaire, and for about two centuries, apart from Ireland, the æsthetic darkness was equal to that which enshrouded the Church and the world. The dawn was close at hand, however, and with the eleventh century we enter upon a new era in which the Church is to rebuild civilisation, and the universal and rejuvenated religion a new art.

CHAPTER IV

The fundamental union having been established of the psychological factors contributed by East and West whereby the human aspects of the Catholic Faith are determined and the Faith itself takes on definitive form, the problem of the development of its art becomes one of the entrance and operation of new racial influences. Christianity has always been cordial to this sort of thing, being an universal and "catholic" religion, and though it admits no abandonment or adulteration of fundamentals, it is, beyond this limitation, infinitely adaptable. The same is true of its art. As Protestantism adulterated and so vitiated certain fundamentals, and abandoned others, substituting such intolerable and repugnant doctrines as those of Calvinism in their place, so the Renaissance in a measure, and "modernism" wholly, has followed a similar course, and to this extent both phenomena are unsympathetic to Catholicism and owe their existence to it in no respect. On the other hand every racial stock, whether Oriental, Latin or "Nordic" has played its part in the development of genuine Christian art and has given it, during the thousand years of its endurance, its infinite diversity in unity.

For the first half of this period the racial contributions have been Mediterranean, the result being Greek, Oriental and Latin in a synthesis varying in times and places in the proportions of the admixture. This is the Constantinian, Syrian and Byzantine art from the fourth century to the tenth century. It is now that another transformation is to be effected, greater even than that which resulted through the fusion of East and West. For many centuries the Northern tribes have been moving into the South from their eeries along the Baltic while Christianity has been sweeping northward. Exhaustion has for a time overtaken the South and the North mounts into the saddle, whether in the Lombards who have occupied the northern portions of Italy or in the Christianised peoples of France, the Rhineland and Britain—Norman, Saxon and Celt. Distinct as were the two racial and psychological elements in the South, this third factor is if possible more different still. The Greek mentality was one of order and repose, bred of clear, intellectual action, giving no place to mystery, disdaining the miraculous, and issuing in the final conception of Fate, which was above man and implacable in its operation. The Oriental mentality rejected the intellectual process. It recognised the dualism in life, posited it of the cosmos, and, accepting this as final, sought for emancipation and deliverance through rejection of the world and a spiritual ascent through passivity and pure transcendentalism. With no conception of the sacramental principle it could not conceive of a correspondence, a reconciliation of matter and spirit, therefore it took refuge in a dualism that found its final issue in Manichæism, while its art, becoming ever more amorphous and fantastic, achieved a similar culmination in the monstrous and hysterical art of India and Indo-China.

Now the Northern races had by nature the same sense of dualism, of the opposition of two antagonistic forces, but with them, while this resulted in an highly developed sense of terror and of awe, it produced as its prompt reaction, not quietism and an effort at escape through renunciation and spiritual isolation, but determined and incessant warfare. Each sought the same escape but by radically different methods. To these men, desperately fighting against they knew not what, and with an abiding sense of defeat and failure that nevertheless deterred them not at all, Christianity came as revelation and release, and they accepted it with avidity. Here was the same recognition and proclamation of dualism, but the cloud of dark terror and mystery was swept away, the definite promise of release through victory was assured them, and through the Catholic sacraments the way of escape and salvation was made plain. Moreover this same sacramental philosophy showed them what the East could never comprehend, that there was an everlasting enmity between matter and spirit but that the two were, or might be made, co-operative, matter incarnating spirit, linking divine with human things, interpreting it and acting as its medium of action, spirit interpenetrating matter in an age-long process of redemption through martyrdom and suffering.

Little of this was of course clearly apprehended, but the underlying force was operative and the result was the intensification of a high spiritual energy and corresponding physical action. The material thing was accepted as a great symbol and the substance for spiritual emotion, the spiritual thing as the transforming alembic. The sense of beauty which is an heritage and birthright of man began to operate creatively along all artistic lines to the glory of the new religion of release and redemption, and the final consummation was what we call Gothic Art.

We have then this distinct racial element linked with a fresh and enormous vigour, but if this was the operating force the inspiring spirit came from another source and that was the great monastic sovereignty (for no lesser word can be used) that had grown out of the first and era-making beginnings at the hands of St. Benedict, A.D. 529. Throughout the Dark Ages (A.D. 500 to 1000), this ever-increasing force had been the saving element in a degenerate and ignoble age, and it is not too much to say that it was monasticism that saved society and religion in the general débâcle of Western Europe, preserving enough to function and fructify when again the rhythm of history made an advance possible. Cluny, that great abbey, was actually the "power house" where the recreative force was engendered, and here for once in any case the Church through its greatest single institution, became the active agent in developing and perfecting Christian art. The Cluniac Rule was promulgated A.D. 927 and during the following three-quarters of a century pretty much everything happened. It was the most dynamic epoch of similar duration in history. Great kings came to begin the redemption of Germany, France and Britain, the Papacy was released from evil bondage by Sylvester II who was followed by Benedict VIII, Clement II, Leo IX and Gregory VII. The Normans, only a few years before the scourge of Europe, were Christianised in 961 and became the great constructive force for an hundred years. With all this, monasticism had more than a little to do, and above all Cluny, but this great order was also the leader in the developing of the arts, while one of its offshoots, the Cistercians, very largely directed the development of Gothic architecture when Cluny, that had controlled the

Romanesque and Norman, began to fail through its enormous wealth and power.

The art of the Middle Ages (A.D. 1000 to 1500) is then the result of the union of Northern blood and Catholic ardour directed by monastic agencies. Other factors entered in, of course, as for example Byzantine tradition and technique through the art and the artizans the Princess Theophano brought from Constantinople when she came to the Empire to become the wife of Otto II and the mother of Otto III; the Greek and Moorish precedents brought over from Syria by returning crusaders; the Roman remains in Gaul and Britain and the valley of the Rhine. There was also the possible influence of the Comacini, traditionally the successors of the old building guilds of Rome, for William of Volpiano, a Lombard and a monk of Cluny, undoubtedly brought craftsmen north out of his own country when in 990 he became Abbot of Saint-Bénigne in Dijon, and began the development of that new art that at the hands of the astonishing converted Vikings of the north coast of France was to take the name of Norman.

The process of assimilating all these diverse and stimulating elements was very moderate. At first there was little structural change in architecture, the old static scheme of Christian Roman times being revived in all its simplicity. The basilica and the cross, very rarely the polygon, were used, but simple columns bearing round arches were invariable, and there was no effort at articulation beyond the simple primitive norm. In ornament alone was there change; Runic spirals and interlacing patterns appear, Celtic and Viking motives, while the crude copying of Roman detail slowly dies away.

As soon as the influence of Cluny becomes operative there is a sudden change, the inherent vitality, the nervous invention, the racial originality of the North begin to work. In a few years the living spirit smitten into the dead bones of decadence begins to show results. Not only does Romanesque and Norman ornament blossom in amazing richness of detail determined by a supreme decorative sense, but the whole organism expands and the basic structural elements, later to form the organic body of Gothic, are swiftly developed. The Oriental polygonal church such as San Vitale is cut in halves and the moiety applied to the basilican nave, so establishing the prototype of the chevet. Barrel vaults are borrowed from the South and swung across narrow naves, then the cross vault is rediscovered and applied, first in the aisles, then over wider spaces. The possibilities of the rib vault are realised, the sexpartite vault is felt out in Caen and there also the principle of the flying buttress is evolved and its practice initiated.

Many of the most valuable monuments in this extending progress were wholly destroyed by the canaille of the French Revolution, such as Saint-Bénigne, Dijon, and, most priceless of all, Cluny which, the greatest church in Christendom, was utterly demolished by the iconoclasts and profiteers of the early nineteenth century. Enough remains however to give an approximate idea of the swift development and the superb nature of this first explicitly Christian architecture of the North. Where the pagan architecture had been an *exterior* art, with no regard, except in Egypt, and there only in a rudimentary way, to interior space; and where Roman and Byzantine art had striven to achieve space in its simplest form, the North worked for interior space that should be mystical and awe-inspiring, not so much because of great dimensions and lofty, circling domes, as through multiplied aisles, chapels, multiplex vaults and the magic of shadow and fluctuant light. Under the Cluniac régime the Benedictine architecture, the Romanesque, was still heavy, static, prone to earth. In the south of France it began to lift ever higher, in its strictly Romanesque way, though still without any highly developed articulation, while in the Rhineland the effort at lift and aspiration was approximated by towers and spires applied in a somewhat haphazard fashion to heavy structures that stubbornly clung to the earth. The structural devices of Normandy solved the whole problem and it is quite possible that this very noble style might, based on these adequate principles, have evolved into something as highly articulated as Gothic, and as triumphant in its achievement of the idea of passionate aspiration and the ultimate conquest of matter, in the form of stone and marble and brick, and of the force of gravity.

It was a very great style, and one wrought out of Christian energy, but it never reached its full flowering, for just as it was ready for this the mood of the time changed, the cultural development passed on to a sudden and brilliant achievement. Benedictine influence weakened under its own riches and the Cistercian austerity took its place. Romanesque and Norman were simply too expensive and they threatened to become more costly still. They represented bulk and power, they did not answer the new craving for spiritual escape through a certain austerity. The soul of man demanded something more subtle and transcendental than the over-gorgeous and static Romanesque, and without the crushing cost that this involved. The answer was what we now know as Gothic, and in the twelfth century its beginnings were to appear.

The material dealt with, that is to say the models and motives not only in architecture but in painting, sculpture, music and all the other arts, came out of the East—Constantinople, Syria, Roman

Egypt. After the transfer of the seat of empire to the shores of the Bosporus Rome became of steadily lessening importance, while the fall of the temporary Western capital of Ravenna sealed the cultural fate of Italy for several centuries. Rome became the seat of the Papacy and no more, while as a result the Papacy itself was irresistibly driven by force of circumstances to take over more and more of the functions of civil government that had fallen from the hands of the vanishing Emperors of the West.

Constantinople, Alexandria and Antioch were now the cultural centres of Europe, and here the arts first began to take definite Christian form, mingling the qualities of Greek tradition and Oriental methods and ways of thought. Architecture developed mightily but figure sculpture was not particularly popular, while painting, following the decrees of the Council of Nicæa, which had declared that the determination of pictorial subjects and their treatment in detail was the province of theologians, the artist merely carrying out orders, assumed a definitely hieratic form with a prescribed dogmatic content. There was no opportunity for originality or development, all was fixed and almost credal. Barring this limitation, however, there was wide scope for artistic effort through the working out of decorative effects, and as a result Byzantine painting on icons, walls and manuscripts became one of the most finely decorative of all the arts.

The tempest of iconoclasm came almost without warning and with certain results hardly anticipated by the arch-iconoclast Leo the Isaurian. This violent assault on art of almost every kind was to be reënacted later by many groups of men in many ages, particularly the Puritans of the Protestant Reformation, and with the same motives. From the time of the Paulicians there have always been those of the Manichæan type of mind who look on matter and all material things as essentially evil and to be antagonised and denied. This of course means revolt against that sacramentalism which is the essence of the Catholic Church, with not only a rejection of the sacraments but also of art which cannot exist without the union of the material and the spiritual, the latter revealing itself and working through and by the former. This is always a lay movement operating by means of the secular authority, and in Byzantium it sprang largely from the army and achieved its century of success through the Emperor Leo III and his immediate successors. It was then, as it has always been since, a non-Christian movement, and somewhat akin to Mohammedanism which, in this particular instance, showed it the fullest sympathy. The devastation was appalling; icons, mosaics, pictures, carvings, art works of every kind were destroyed out of hand and with a completeness only to be equalled a thousand years later by Calvinists, Huguenots and Puritans. So far as religious art was concerned the Eastern Empire became a desert, while torture and martyrdoms were meted out to bishops, priests, monks and even secular officials who dared to defy the Emperor and the army.

Against this combination of heresy and sacrilege the monks of the East stood firm, accepting banishment and death rather than surrender their faith. Rome condemned the whole movement and fought it strenuously for the implications of fatal heresy were too evident. This was one of the moving causes which had issue in the first schism of East and West. At last, after a century of persecution and destruction, the fire burned itself out and the Regent Theodora restored all things as before. The old art could not be recovered, of course, but a new beginning was made on the old lines, and as was to happen again many centuries later, it was the monks who had preserved the great tradition through the dark days, who in secret had been developing and improving their illuminations and miniature painting—the basis of the new pictorial and sculptural art of the West—and who now made possible a new artistic dispensation. Meanwhile many of those same monks had gone into exile in Europe, together with painters, workers in mosaic and ivory and enamel, and through them the fire of artistic creation was brought into Western Europe to kindle the new flame of Christian art. The old Oriental autocracy, the fixed tradition of prescribed matter and form, did not serve here. In place of a single united Empire was the interplay of varied races, and ethnic traits, with a pronounced and sometimes violent individualism, an abiding sense of liberty. Driven by the energy of the Catholic Faith the result could only be a new art.

CHAPTER V

While Christianity was slowly forging for itself a new and adequate architectural expression, many of the other arts were experiencing the pervasive, re-creative influence. While in painting and the making of statues there was no particular activity or even promise during the Dark Ages, there were three other arts that were fired with new life, music, ivory carving and the illumination of manuscripts. In the first of these, the direct, explicit operation of the Church, as an organism, was unmistakable and unquestioned; indeed it is true to say that the whole varied cycle of musical composition from Hilary of Poitiers to Bach and César Franck was made possible by this deliberate and continued action of the Catholic Church. While the other arts were adaptations of pre-existing arts to a new service, music and stained. glass may be accepted as original contributions on the part of the Church.

From the emancipation of Christianity under Constantine the development of the liturgy had gone on apace, crystallising in the four rites of Alexandria, Antioch, Rome and Gaul. Of the ceremonies and ritual used during the persecutions we know very little, but in any case music, as we do know, was an essential part. Beginning with the fourth century, the liturgy became at once and in itself a great work of art, perhaps the greatest. Contrary to general opinion, particularly Protestant, these primitive services of the Church were of extraordinary elaboration and magnificence, the Roman use being by far the simplest of all and much what it is to-day when, throughout the West, it has become the established rite. In the Eastern Orthodox Churches and in the Mozarabic liturgy of Spain, still preserved in a single chapel in Toledo and one in Salamanca, one can see something of the nature of the sumptuous, intricate and even esoteric ritual that characterised the primitive Church.

The original sources of Catholic church music are obscure. Probably all were in the East and they may have derived from the two sources of Greek tradition and the synagogue services. When St. Ambrose became Bishop of Milan A.D. 374 he set about improving and enriching the liturgy he found in use, and especially he devoted himself to developing church music, amongst other things instituting antiphonal singing, himself writing many hymns, and finally determining what has since been known as the Ambrosian chant. Two centuries later, under the pontificate of St. Gregory the Great was accomplished the completion as well as the apotheosis of the work begun by St. Ambrose. When the Pope died, A.D. 604, music had been completely adapted to Catholic worship and with a perfection and exquisite subtlety comparable only with the perfecting of Gothic architecture. In form, beauty and sacred quality this music of the Gregorian mode is one of the great achievements in Christian art and it is explicitly a work of the Catholic Church. So perfect was it, it continued unchallenged for five hundred years, only slowly falling into disfavour in the West, and so degenerating, with the rise of polyphonic music, again to be restored in this day and generation following the Motu Proprio of Pope Pius X. Until the time of Charlemagne all church music was *a capella,* or unaccompanied by musical instruments; organs were then first used, but probably only for the simplest accompaniments. With the evolution of polyphonic music after Palestrina the organ also began to increase in capacity and in favour, other instruments came into play and the great art of music, the most subtle, personal and poignant of all, achieved in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries its apotheosis and became the supreme art of secular society as well.

As I have said in the last chapter, sculpture, except that which was purely decorative, was never particularly favoured by the Church so long as, humanly speaking, it was under the dominance of the East. It was in a sense too definite, too explicit in its material quality. Painting and mosaic gave greater play to the imagination and appealed more poignantly to the emotions. There was also the latent fear of idolatry that found its climax later in the excesses of iconoclasm. This was perfectly natural. The sculptured gods of Persia and Babylonia and Egypt were apt to be things of terror, not of beauty like the gods of Greece. These, both in themselves and in their presentments, were mostly human and appealing, instinct with pure beauty and easily transformed into Christian symbols. The gods of the East were amorphous, deformed, redolent of cruelty and wrath and with no kinship to the newly revealed religion. Painting and mosaic had no such connotations, and the colour and gold were infinitely acceptable to the Eastern mind. It is curious, however, that the Greek element that entered so intimately into the new religious synthesis should have been so completely subordinated in the matter of sculpture. It may be that there was more than we imagine and that the iconoclastic fury made so clean a sweep that nothing whatever remains. Of sarcophagi there are many, usually quite Roman in style, though very debased in workmanship, while fragments of broken ambos and panels, together with the fifth century sculptured columns of the baldachino of the high altar of St. Mark's in Venice show that sculpture was not wholly ignored. It is all pretty barbarous, however, and not on a par with the other arts.

In ivory carving the case is quite different. This art, which was to have so great an influence in determining the type of Romanesque and Gothic sculpture, probably had its origin in the Far East, but by the fourth century it was firmly established both in Byzantium and in Italy. The diptych, either consular or religious, is one of the earliest forms, and the style and craftsmanship are frequently of the highest order. From the fifth century on the style is purely Byzantine; caskets, book covers, triptychs, were produced in great quantities both in the East and the West, and in the former the art is one of major importance, partly perhaps because during the iconoclastic period the articles being small were easily concealed from the imperial censors. In the West, after the appearance of figure sculpture in the eleventh century, it lost this position and became identified with the minor arts though retaining its beauty and its perfection of execution for several centuries.

It was on the basis of this exquisite ivory carving that the great fabric of Mediæval sculpture was erected, precisely as painting developed from the miniatures and illuminations of Byzantium; and the Byzantine qualities of facial type, pose, composition and alignment of draperies persist in diminishing degree down even to the fifteenth century, the curved line of the figures of Our Lady, so characteristic of late Gothic sculpture, being reminiscent of the curved elephants' tusks from which the earlier small ivory statues were made.

If in architecture Byzantium produced the first adequate expression in material form of Catholic Christianity, in the art of mosaic decoration it almost created a new art, and one that with ivory carving was to determine for many centuries the pictorial art of the West. Originally a contribution of the East it was known and practised in imperial Rome, particularly in Alexandria and other parts of North Africa. Taken over by Christianity as soon as Constantine released the Church from bondage, it burst into sudden new glory in the fourth century and from then on for a thousand years it was the great and most popular form of wall decoration. The major part has disappeared, swept away by Moslems, iconoclasts and the barbarism of the later Renaissance, but enough remains in the Levant, in Italy, Sicily and the Balkans to demonstrate its unique glory. It achieved its highest point in the twelfth century and its influence continued over the fields of painting and sculpture for another three hundred years. Probably the nature of its technique had something to do with the form that was taken on by Byzantine pictorial art, for, like stained glass, the other original creation of Christianity, it is conditioned in its design by the quality of its materials. In the ignoble decadence of this art during the last two centuries the Church gave its sanction and patronage to a debased mosaic art that strove to emulate painting, just as during the same period the once noble art of stained glass tried the same pitiful game with ludicrous results. Every art is conditioned by its legitimate technique and all good art recognises this limitation while bad art makes a point of ignoring it. The Christian arts were always honest and it was not until the sixteenth century that deceit and an attempt at transcending limitations crept in.

Given the dogmatic dictation of the Church, the Eastern inclination towards the mystical and the hieratic, with the Byzantine love of splendour in colour and gold and jewels, it is not hard to see why mosaic should have developed a type of design that could only have influenced all future art profoundly. It is not impossible that it may have been largely responsible for the complete change from the naturalistic painting and sculpture of Rome which marked the work of the earliest Christian period to the definite type now distinguished as Byzantine; severe, highly conventionalised, without perspective, clear and firm in its silhouettes and marked by very masterly space-composition. The traditional gold backgrounds and the gold drapery lines and edges of the painting of the thirteenth century from Margheritone of Arezzo and Duccio onward, are elements carried over into a new medium from the Byzantine mosaics of preceding centuries.

Architecture always was, and is, a secular art, the work of laymen, inspired by a vital, pervasive and stimulating religion, and working along their own lines in the employment of secular or ecclesiastical authority, but with full freedom of action. Painting also was and is a secular art, but here the control of the Church was explicit and until the very early Renaissance the painter did pretty much what he was told. The art of illumination was a monastic art and it is the most explicit representation of the essentially ecclesiastical idea. Originating in Egypt in the days of the Ptolemies, it found a congenial home in Alexandria, Syria and Byzantium, therefore, in the beginning it is strongly Hellenic in quality. By the middle of the sixth century pictured scenes appear in the midst of decorative ornament and the colour and gold of Eastern mosaics are taken over for the greater glory of the written page. The oldest example in existence is the "Vienna Genesis" done in silver on purple vellum, with illustrative miniatures at the bottom of the page, while the "Joshua Rotulus" in the Vatican has many full-page pictures. In this sixth-century work the Greek feeling is strong, in fact the conservative monks held to this style far more consistently than did the contemporary workers in the other arts. There is also far more individuality, even naturalism, than appears in the wall-painting and other "public" art, possibly because the monkish designers were exempt from the ecclesiastical control that was exerted over those whose products were for the instruction and edification of the faithful.

Probably not one in a thousand of the illuminated manuscripts that came out of the East still exists; for Reformation, Revolution and the eighteenth century wiped them out of existence, either from fury or ignorance, a single example being the holocaust that was made of such works of art in England in the sixteenth century when they were used to feed furnaces or were sent over to the Low Countries in shiploads to be used for various base commercial purposes. That these illuminated Gospels and other manuscripts came into Western Europe in great numbers we know, and also that they did actually serve as models for both the mosaic and the wall painting of the early Middle Ages. With their greater naturalism and individuality, they served to counteract something of the rigidly schematic and formalised quality of Byzantine painting and mosaics, and with the ivory carvings, also more vital and varied, they formed the third of the trio of influences that conditioned the development of the Christian art of the Mediæval period.

Whenever art is a vital thing it extends over the entire field of human activity. Under a wide and genuine culture, there is no such thing as a high standard of production in one or more of the arts with ugliness elsewhere. Varying conditions may exalt one art above another from time to time, as sculpture and dramatic poetry in Greece, architecture in the Middle Ages, painting in the fifteenth century, music in the eighteenth, but even though they are on a plane a degree lower in comparison, the other arts and art-crafts are still of a high order. This, of course, is true of the first five centuries of Christianity after the Edict of Constantine, while Byzantine influence was supreme. All the arts flourished there with the exception of the century of iconoclasm, and even then the ban on religious art that drove many of the artists and craftsmen into exile, turned the activities of those that remained towards secular art with a resulting increase in its quantity and perfection. With the close contact between East and West that sent traders and travellers back and forth in great numbers, not to speak of the brides with their treasures and trains of attendants and favoured craftsmen, for royal and noble alliances were no uncommon matter, the influx of Eastern art into the West was constant and pervasive.

Enamels, jewels, the work of goldsmiths, woven stuffs and embroideries were regularly displayed before the eyes of men covetous of their beauty and eager in their crescent spirit of emulation. The spirit they brought to this later task was different indeed to that of the luxurious and somewhat effete Byzantines, but the religion was the same and the compulsion of the competent and standardised beauty sufficient to preserve enough of the established tradition. What these men of Lombardy and Gaul and the Rhineland and Britain made of this Eastern leaven is the history of the development and final achievement of Gothic architecture and Mediæval art.

CHAPTER VI

A distinguishing mark of the Catholic Church is what might perhaps be called that "progressive revelation" whereby, century after century, and through the contributions of diverse races, new aspects of an ultimate faith are constantly unfolding themselves. There is nothing static in Catholicism—except its fundamentals. As in all other things it sensitively adapts itself to individuals and peoples, so it accepts from them, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the things they bring as gifts for the enrichment or *éclaircissement* of a religion in its essentials unchangeable. The contribution made by the races of the North, and the peoples now under that influence, was a certain humanism, a personal and intimate relationship, that was more akin to the religion of the catacombs than to that of later Rome or Imperial Byzantium. The reality of the Communion of Saints became more obvious than ever before while, in religion at least, pity, mercy, charity, the loving-kindness of God, His comprehension of man's troubles and temptations, these all became active beliefs that had their part in forming society and developing its culture and its art. To a great extent this centred in and around Our Lady and the Saints, the friends of struggling and suffering human beings, and intercessors for them before the throne of justice. Preachers inveighed ardently against mortal sin and its incurred punishment, while painters and sculptors ingeniously depicted the threatened torments, but behind all this was the abiding knowledge of divine comprehension and infinite mercy, fortified, guaranteed and operative through the Sacraments, the overflowing reservoir of the merits of the Saints, and the cleansing and regeneration of purgatory. It is not safe to infer from the imprecations of contemporary revivalists or the ingenious fancies of free-handed sculptors that the religion of the Middle Ages was altogether a thing of terror and wrath. These factors were present, of course, but they bulked far less large than was the case some centuries later when Dr. Calvin preached an even sterner evangel, but without the compensations and correctives of Catholicism.

These human and intimate and affectionate factors were bound to show themselves in the art of the time and they conspicuously did. No one has better understood this quality of the Catholic religion, or shown better its working out in its own art, than Henry Adams, whose "Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres" is a monument of something almost approaching inspiration. It is impossible to estimate Gothic architecture or its allied and inseparable arts on the sole basis of structural devices and antecedent, historical forms. This is a method that misleads and an attitude that vitiates so much that has been written on the arts of the Middle Ages, and is akin to that "economic interpretation of history" that has falsified so much of modern history. True to its almost sacramental nature, all art has indeed its material factors, and the analysis of these, the demonstration of their working, their interplay and their triumphant issue, is a valuable and an alluring study. But along with these are spiritual factors of at least equal potency and import and these the modern student and essayist are apt to ignore. Speaking for the moment only of Gothic architecture, there is certainly a definite Gothic *form*, individual, unmistakable, but there is also a Gothic *spirit*, equally clear and explicit, and it is the amalgamation of these two factors that made Gothic art. This could not have developed amongst Eastern or Mediterranean peoples, nor under any religion except that of Catholicism. It is of the blood and bone and soul of the Catholic North and as such it must be estimated and as such it may be appreciated and revered.

In dealing with art in all its protean forms, it is natural to consider architecture first. This does not necessarily imply priority either in time or excellence. Great as it has always been as an art in itself, it has a more important quality as a coordinator of all the arts. There is no such thing as "pure design" nor such an entity as "pure architecture." Without the other arts—sculpture, painting, metal-work for example—it is indeed, or may be made, a scheme of organic construction, more or less highly articulated and with power and majesty and evocative, emotional value, but for its highest manifestations it must command the intimate co-operation of all the other arts. In structures built for worship it finds its fullest possibilities and here it assembles the greatest number of arts, including drama (through liturgy and ritual) and music, which in a sense breathes the breath of life into something otherwise, it may be, majestic and beautiful, but with the beauty of abstraction and lifeless repose.

What magic there was in the year 1000 does not appear, but from then on the development of Christian art was headlong in its impetuosity. As I have said, my own theory is that the Lombard, William of Volpiano, started the architectural progress at Dijon. This continued at Fécamp, Jumièges, Cérisy, but always along Norman lines. With Lanfranc, Abbot of Bec, also an Italian and probably Lombard, this style reached its climax, first in Caen where, as already said, the great and revolutionary structural devices that were to be taken over en masse to form the foundations of the Gothic fabric, were being worked out, and later in England where Lanfranc had been made Archbishop of Canterbury. The structural innovations of Caen found no favour here, but the Norman style reached new heights of purely stylistic development, more varied and original than in Normandy itself.

The time was at hand for the emergence of the new style that was to express the amazing vitality and the sound, comprehensive culture of the time. The beneficent feudal system was in full operation, trades and crafts were achieving salutary organisation under the guild system; great kings sat on the thrones of Europe, the Church had been redeemed from its degeneracy of personnel and its way of life during the second Dark Ages, there were great theologians and philosophers and the making of greater schools, and finally the Cistercian reform had put new vigour into monasticism and restored it to its place as a leader of society. It was perhaps the most brilliant epoch, take it by and large, since the Fall of Rome, and great results could only follow in its art.

The development of Gothic, from its first showing at Bury in rudimentary and tentative form, to its completeness (not its perfection) at Abbot Suger's Saint-Denis, covered a space of fifteen years—A.D. 1125 to 1140. This is almost incredible but it appears to be a fact. Of course, all the great structural elements had been worked out under the Normans, ribbed, quadripartite and sexpartite vaults, flying buttresses, the chevet, and the "order" of arcade, triforium and clerestory, together with the cruciform plan, the west front composition of towers and portals, and indeed all that goes to make up the consistent and highly articulated Gothic church. What remained was to perfect this rudimentary organism, get rid of its structural superfluities, knit the whole thing into a scientifically perfect entity—and give it Gothic, as opposed to Norman or Romanesque character.

How this was done, or why, and in the space of fifteen or twenty years, is a mystery, but the fact remains. Apparently there had been a long period of gestation while the factors of Northern blood, revivified religion, monastic fervour, orderly society, organised labour, the Crusades, the rediscovery of the world through commercial and adventurous travel, all had been working hiddenly and in secret. The process was completed, the day of birth arrived, and suddenly the world knew a new thing.

Immediately began the great movement of church building that swept France, sped over Spain in the wake of the reconquest, followed the Rhine to the sea and crossed the Channel into

England. It never touched Italy and reached Teutonic lands only in its later forms, but the rest of Western Europe was under its control for nearly four hundred years. Following the vicissitudes of society and culture, both secular and religious, it went through many phases in as many lands, from the austerity of the thirteenth century to the Flamboyant and the Perpendicular and their kin in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It was the second great Christian style and was peculiarly our own in so far as we, and our civilisation and our culture, are of the North. It associates itself in history with the names of bishops, abbots, ecclesiastics generally. How far this is just is matter for doubt. Men like William of Volpiano, Lanfranc of Bec, Suger of Saint-Denis, certainly had much to do with the initiating of great building projects, probably with the determining of the general lines on which they were to be worked out, but I gravely doubt if they had much to do with the actual evolution and fixing of this, or any other style. The building guilds, fixed or itinerant, were now an actuality, and a few years later the names of the master-builders became of record. This is particularly true of Spain where the men responsible for all the great churches are known—except one, the noblest of all, Seville, which stands like a miraculous creation, "an house not built by hands."

After all it hardly matters. The air of the three centuries from one thousand to fourteen hundred, was surcharged with dynamic vitality, an energy that interpenetrated all of society, and it was bound to precipitate itself in visible and material form whether through religious or secular channels, and this it did to admiration. In its structural principles, the *mise-en-scène*, so to speak, it strove to create, and the individual quality of its ornament, it never changed. Sometimes its organic quality was perfectly worked out, as in France and Spain; sometimes less even than indifferently well as in England. Foreign to the Italian temper it has no vogue there at all, the Mediæval spirit showing itself, if ever, in a modification of the earlier Lombard-Romanesque combination. In every country it took on its own particular colour, but however original, appealing and intriguing the Gothic of England, Flanders, Castile, Cataluña, Andalućia, that of France was, and must always remain, the perfect and well-rounded expression of this great period of Christian culture.

Simultaneously with architecture, the other arts were blossoming with almost equal glory. This is particularly true of sculpture. The humanism and intimate personal quality of contemporary Catholicism demanded the most explicit presentation of the saints and angels; more than painting and mosaic, with their two-dimensional limitations, could give. While in Italy recourse was had to the vestiges of Roman work as models for the reawakening art, in France and generally in the North, it was rather the ivory carvings and the illuminations of Byzantium that served this purpose. From the eleventh century on the progress is both steady and swift. It is evident from the infinite variety in style, the individuality of treatment and technique, that the sculptors had an absolutely free hand, unhampered by the dictates of ecclesiastical authority, or, and increasingly as time went on, by precedent or tradition. During the twelfth century the work was majestic, architectonic, and superbly decorative, but even here there is extreme diversity as between schools and even the master-workmen who issued from them. It was an age of extraordinary freedom and individuality, but back of this was the tremendous creative power of fresh and unspoiled, or newly enfranchised, races, clamouring for the chance for self-expression. Little by little the factors of liberty and humanism transformed, or rather modified, the early and more hieratic art, and with the thirteenth century there came greater realism and a more marked fluency. Always, however, the decorative sense remained while the desire for beauty of line and composition increased exceedingly. There is much of the sculpture of this period (the major part was broken up and made into road metal or calcined in lime kilns in the various tempests of barbarism that swept all Europe) that can confidently take its place with that of Egypt, Greece and China, as the greatest sculpture in the world.

While this was a modification, and in some sense a glorification of an already-existing art fallen into momentary decadence, the art of stained glass can only be considered as something entirely new and the original product of the artists of the Christian dispensation. Coloured glass set in geometric forms had been used in the East and in Alexandria, but to employ it pictorially and for the filling of great windows was an entirely new thing. Its possibilities were realised in the twelfth century and seized upon with avidity. A few years only served to bring it to its culmination as we see it to-day in such places as Chartres, Bourges and Canterbury. Through this great and unique art colour, the contribution of the East to the Christian synthesis achieved its final triumph. As used by the workers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and measurably, though in lessening degree, by those who followed during the next two hundred years, stained glass became not only a devouring passion with the people of the time, both clerical and lay, but also the agency of the most poignant and effective emotional appeal. In its mingling of material definiteness and transcendent glory there was that which seemed most perfectly to express the ardent and comprehensive religion of the time.

Accepted first of all by architect and master-builder as the perfect concomitant of his structural work, it finally became almost an obsession, and architecture itself began to change its form in order to permit the use of more and more of the almost miraculous product. The exquisite science of Gothic architecture was instinctively working towards greater economy of material through concentration of loads and the balancing of weights and thrusts, whereby in a certain mystical way was symbolised the triumph of living spirit over inert matter, and this new and absorbing art worked towards the same ends, since it demanded more and more space for the display of its glory. At last, as in the Cathedral of Leon in Spain, the fabric became hardly more than an intricate and wiry cage of masonry framing walls of apocalyptic colour and light.

With that sanity that marked all their artistic activities, the men of the Middle Ages developed the accurate and fitting technique for their new art, and never transcended it. It was not until the Renaissance, when art became a thing founded on preconceived theories and was worked out through artifice rather than implicit instinct, that here, as in architecture, the laws and limitations proper to the art were transcended or reversed, and stained glass ceased to be this and fell into the ignominious category of pure artifice, with its depth of fall achieved in the nineteenth century when misguided men strove to copy easel pictures in the intractable materials of glass and lead, so hopelessly confusing their categories and producing the amusing barbarities that for a generation did duty as substitutes for a great and, for a time, a lost art.

This is not a history of Christian architecture or of any of the arts, nor is it an apologia for them, nor an exaltation of their beauty and perfection. It is no more than a brief narrative of the transformation of eternal arts under the impulse and inspiration of a new religion, by the very compulsion of the culture and the social system so brought into being, and measurably, through the directing influence of the bishops and priests and monks who were the representatives of the organic Church. It is, therefore, enough to say that at last during these centuries of the Middle Ages, the Catholic religion and its social counterpart achieved full and complete artistic expression, and when the twin impulses of Reformation and Renaissance came, in unnatural union, to destroy the old and establish a new social world in Europe, they found in its perfection, one of the great arts of human history and one which was both completely comprehensive and at the same time sensitively expressive of the culture and the spiritual energies that had brought it triumphantly into being.

CHAPTER VII

It would be difficult to express in measured terms the comprehensive achievement and the great glory of the thirteenth century. After several hundred years of worse than oblivion, misjudged by ignorance and misrepresented by unscrupulous propaganda, it is now by way of coming into its own and is achieving recognition as a century that finds no more than one rival in all history. All the arts, barring only music and painting, then reached their highest point under the Christian dispensation, and in this they only paralleled the cultural achievements of this miraculous age, whether in politics, economics, philosophy, education, religion or the social organism. It would seem that the aim of the Catholic Church to establish a perfect and workable social state under her guidance and energised by the religion she professed, had been achieved, and yet what seemed like final accomplishment was only the prelude to an almost complete disaster. With the opening of the fourteenth century everything so laboriously built up during Mediævalism began to crash in ruin and when the long and lamentable process was over, an entirely new world had come into being.

From the death of Pope Nicholas IV in 1292 the process may be said to have begun in Italy and, with the establishment of French secular supremacy over the Papacy with the beginning of the exile at Avignon in 1309, it was established and made operative for seventy-five years. Not even the Fall of Rome in the fourth century, the French Revolution in the eighteenth century, or the Russian Revolution in the twentieth century can compare with this period in the comprehensiveness of its results. A world that had been laboriously built up during a thousand years crumbled away in a century and for good or ill a new thing took its place.

Beginning in Italy and extending at once into France, this process of destruction and re-creation was strongly retarded in other parts of Europe, particularly in England, and in Spain where the reconquest was vigorously in process. It was not until the repercussions of the Reformation struck England in the time of Henry VIII that the Mediæval synthesis began to go to pieces, while in Spain it has not as yet wholly disappeared.

As art has always been the product and the manifestation of a definite cultural period, so in its most highly specialised achievements and in certain of its most distinguished products it occurs, not synchronously with the crest of social and cultural attainment, but after the driving energy has ceased to function with power. This is particularly true of music and especially painting, the two most abstract and personal of the arts. During the great thirteenth century while architecture and sculpture were attaining heights at least equal to anything that had gone before, and far greater than what has since been achieved, painting, except in the minor art of illumination and possibly in fresco, though, these vestiges being now wholly obliterated, there is no proof, made no progress whatever until the very end of the century. It was not until the appearance of Cimabue, about 1290, that any advance was made beyond the rigid formulæ of the Byzantine precedent, but from then on, particularly after Giotto with his humanism and naturalism, the progress was headlong in its impetuosity. It was a purely secular movement and a secular art, so far as its creators were concerned, but it was eagerly seized on by the Church that realised at once its didactic and emotional power, and to the end, three centuries later, it was the ecclesiastical power that gave the new art its strongest backing as it offered through religion itself the most stimulating subjects and the most powerful motive force.

In Italy, where it all began, the religious quality in painting, so strong at first in the work of Duccio, Cimabue and Giotto, continued with considerable, but diminishing force, well into the middle of the sixteenth century, disappearing finally with Leonardo, Michelangelo and Tintoretto.

The Renaissance had established a new paganism and a new society, sumptuous, luxurious, splendid with outward beauty, intellectually brilliant, shot with wars, tumults and manifold disorders, and, from any earlier Christian point of view, quite licentious and amoral. Judged by earlier standards and as the records appear in nineteenth-century histories, the ethical standards of the time were more than deplorable, while the morals of the clergy are held up to shame and condemnation. By standards other than those of the period in question this is undoubtedly true, but it is to be borne in mind that these standards vary and that during the Renaissance custom condoned or even justified what in the nineteenth century would be condemned with horror and disgust. Probably clerical morals in the time under consideration were somewhat better than those of the nobles and the general public, which may not be saying much. In any case church and state vied with each other in the pursuit of every sort of intellectual and æsthetic culture, and princes, nobles and churchmen, with complete unanimity, seized on art of every kind, making it the recipient of their bounty and the object of their patronage, the beneficiary of their poured-out wealth.

Not only this, but all lines of distinction between the arts were broken down. Amateurs became practitioners, goldsmiths turned suddenly into architects and painters, sculptors became poets, and savants and archæologists practising artists. And always there was the greedy clamour for more art, greater luxury, a more opulent output of concrete beauty. The new style, which had been deliberately created at the instigation of a few enthusiasts and under the compulsion of a long-forgotten and now re-discovered art, had no relationship to society as a whole and was actually imposed thereon from without and at the hands of a small group of amateurs. It was, however, supported by every powerful influence, and Popes, the College of Cardinals, bishops, ecclesiastics of every kind were in the forefront of the movement to make it universal. It was not a very hard task. Italy had never known the compulsion of Gothic, or very much what it stood for. The movement that had swept the North left her untouched, and neither in architecture, sculpture or any other of the arts had anything particular happened since the basilicas of Constantine, the transplanted Byzantine of Ravenna and Venice and Sicily, the Romanesque of Apulia and Pisa and the Lombard of the North. And all of this was very long ago. The Cistercian Gothic imported here and there was unsympathetic, the pseudo-Gothic of Arnolfo was, to tell the truth, rather inferior stuff, and altogether the field was quite clear for something new. Backed enthusiastically by high society and subsidised by prodigal wealth this new style, stately, opulent and seductive, carried all before it and became fixed in a generation. After all it was Italian in temper and of Italian invention, so it was naturally acceptable. Moreover, for the moment religion had become pretty thoroughly secularised, in the process of sloughing off its mysticism, its asceticism, even its ethical connotations. Renaissance art, once accepted, fitted the time to perfection and the temper of society and religion with equal intimacy, therefore, it was as logical a development as Byzantine or Gothic. With them it may be considered a legitimate product of Catholicism, if we are prepared to admit that the religion of the time was Catholic in more than name, for even more than the secular Medici, the Popes and the Italian hierarchy, by their patronage and ardent sympathy, are responsible for its swift and successful development.

Whether we like the architecture and the sculpture or not, there can be no difference of opinion as to the other art of painting which after Masaccio suddenly burst into a new mode and became indeed almost a new art. The painting of the fourteenth century in Italy, and of the fifteenth century in Spain and Flanders belongs to the Middle

Ages but after that there is explicit modernism from which the ethos of Mediævalism has wholly departed. Bellini and Carpaccio, Huguet and Vergos, Memling and Van Eyck are of the old succession, Catholic and conservative, ecclesiastical in impulse rather than secular, though wholly modern in technique. Titian, Velásquez, Rubens, representing the great epoch of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, are of another world, the rich, luxurious, secularised world, that was the fruit of the Renaissance. Painting for churches still remains the principal field of activity and profit but now the art itself is the chief consideration both with painter and patron, and the religious content is something added, sometimes well, sometimes ill, but it is not the *esse* of the work. Occasionally there is a flare-back, an El Greco, or Tintoretto or Murillo, while the individual painter contributes his own unique personality and through the new technique reveals his own ardent personal religion, but the air is no longer charged with spiritual energy, the flashes of truly religious art are episodic and individualised; the art of painting as a whole is now, and is to remain, even until to-day, the handmaid, no longer of religion in any sense, but of a secular society in which religion plays, at best, a purely adventitious part.

Two of the very great manifestations of art, the painting of the fifteenth century and that of the sixteenth century, were both fostered in large degree by the Catholic Church through its personal representatives, in the first instance for religious reasons, in the second artistic. From Giotto to Raphael in Italy, Memling in Flanders and El Greco in Spain, the whole spirit of the Catholic Middle Ages expressed itself with a completeness equalled only by its architecture of the thirteenth century. Its highest point occurred when to Mediæval spirit it added something of Renaissance form, just as in the case of Shakespeare. The art of Carpaccio, Vergos, the Van Eycks is a complex of absolute beauty, instinct with pure spiritual ardour and enshrined in a technique that has the exquisite perfection of a Byzantine ivory carving or a Mediæval manuscript. It cannot be said that modern painting from Raphael, Leonardo and Michelangelo is a rival, for it is of another spirit, in another age. It was perhaps of equal glory, but it has no relationship to the Catholic ethos and therefore does not come under consideration here.

While the great Catholic entity of the Middle Ages was finding its last and perfect artistic expression in this painting of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, even while it was dissolving and disappearing from life, the new era that was to find its culmination in our own day was fast pushing forward to take its place. As the Renaissance which had had so luminous a dawn in passionate enthusiasm and real idealism began to decay in corruption, civil conflicts, and a new barbarism cloaked in a delusive splendour of outward appearance, the varied arts that had borne eloquent witness to a culture that had passed away suddenly suffered the same eclipse. Architecture froze into the dull and sterile formalities of Paladio and Herera. Sculpture deliquesced into the puerilities of Bernini, while painting went over to the secular side and religion was to know it no more. It was the collapse of a great ideal and the achievement of ruin where regeneration had been the goal. The fate of the untimely dreams of Akhnaton of Egypt, four thousand years before, the catastrophes that in our own time have overtaken the democratic revolutions of the eighteenth century and the communist revolution of the twentieth, are the only adequate parallels in history. With the coming of the Reformation, synchronising as it did with the failure of the Renaissance, art ceased to be an active force in society. Instinctive love for beauty continued for a time in secular life, though with that diminishing force that was finally to be extinguished about 1830, and the minor art-crafts held on amongst those who were least affected by the spiritual and material violence that was sweeping society. This was particularly true of Spain which never experienced the worst abuses of the Renaissance, escaped the Protestant Reformation altogether, and knew the social and political revolutions of the eighteenth century only through sporadic episodes and the military invasions and spoliations of France.

The Lutheran, Calvinist, Huguenot and Puritan agencies that grew out of the Reformation fell on the vast body of Christian art that inconceivably glorified all Western Europe at the end of the fifteenth century, like the hordes of Ghengis Khan. Outside Italy and Spain little escaped, compared with what had once been. Except in England where half its noblest monuments were destroyed, architecture was largely spared, much surviving only to meet more complete destruction in the political revolutions that were to follow, and at the hands of enlightened ecclesiastical authorities a century later. Very fortunately most of the greatest pictorial art was in Italy, Spain and Catholic Flanders, so this escaped, but the other arts, particularly sculpture, glass, tapestries, wood-carving, metal work, illumination, were practically obliterated in the space of half a century. It was ruin and extinction worse even than that of the Iconoclasts a thousand years before in the Byzantine Empire.

Having accepted a religion which hated and destroyed beauty in every form, and having acquired the habit of destroying beautiful things at sight, it is not surprising that the North now became artistically barren with an aridity that was hardly equalled in the first Dark Ages. Literature, stimulated by the new craft of printing, alone survived, music achieving a new birth after a time and in the lands where the comparatively mild régime of Lutheranism made this possible. Here also, and in the Low Countries as well as Spain, a now thoroughly secularised painting produced the last great heirs of the Renaissance—Rembrandt, Velásquez, Goya, but the instinctive impulse was dead and so far as general society was concerned the decline was continuous to the inevitable end in the nineteenth century.

The great Catholic Reformation that followed the wild debauch of the late Renaissance and the violence, anarchy and apostasy of the Reformation, restored religion and something of sane and decent society in Italy, France and the southern Teutonic states, but for some reason it seemed to have no apparent result in stimulating art expression. The sterile and verbose artificialities of the fully developed classic architecture did indeed yield to a new thing which was really the human protest against professional standardisation and supercilious superiority. Baroque and Rococo architecture were artistic parallels of the Restoration period in England, and like this they were somewhat violent, uncontrolled, over-emphatic, but still full of a resurgent human passion; a sort of last emergence of dying Mediæval spirit, though riotous, and neither directed by an inherent good taste nor mitigated by those considerations that had kept the world of the Middle Ages on substantially an even keel. The Society of Jesus, that had played the determining part in carrying through the Counter-Reformation, was essentially realist in its principles, and it simply took over this Baroque style of human protest and revolt and made it its own. So with all the other active forces of regenerated Catholicism, therefore, it was this personal and passionate and wildly imaginative, if somewhat voluptuous style that became the standard architectural expression of the post-Renaissance, post-Reformation Church. In Spain where the breach with the Mediæval synthesis had been less marked, the most beautiful results were achieved, and the same is true of the Spanish colonies, particularly Mexico, where the very advanced civilisation implanted there in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries found a marvellous flowering in an architectural expression that achieved almost national and distinctive quality.

In the decorative and industrial arts also this period produced marvellous results, particularly in wood-carving, metal work, textiles and embroideries. Here Spain again took the lead. From the earliest days of the Reconquest the peoples of the Peninsula had specialised in all these arts, particularly in painted altars and retables and in every sort of metal work. The Mediæval retables of painted panels and intricate wood plated with gold-leaf, are amongst the finest products of Catholic art, and fortunately they, and the other art-works of the Middle Ages, are better preserved here than elsewhere, for neither Reformation nor internal revolution ever came to sweep them away as happened in France, England and Germany. French invasions did a good deal along this line, though less through destruction than pillage, while the republican excesses of the brief insanity of the nineteenth century, are responsible for a certain amount of irretrievable ruin. The worst visitation of all was this same Baroque fashion which led so many ecclesiastics and pious grandees to pull down and discard exquisite works of Gothic art in order to substitute the sumptuous and splendid upholstery of the new and popular style.

As in Spain even the reign of emancipated artistic invention in the shape of Plateresque and Chirurgeresque fecundity could not last, so elsewhere the fever cooled and disappeared and the universal dullness and sterility of the nineteenth century became an established fact. Catholic art passed away in the drab frivolities or insipid futilities after this sudden burst of florid and highly coloured sunset glory. So as a matter of fact, did all other art (music always excepted) religious or secular, "high" art, or industrial. Æsthetic energy and creative ardour can withstand a good deal and still survive, but the combination of Renaissance, Reformation, Revolution and Restoration was too much, and for the first time in history the dawn of the nineteenth century lightened a world from which art had practically disappeared.

CHAPTER VIII

If the statement with which I ended the last chapter is true, and I think it is demonstrably so, then it certainly contains matter for thought. How does it happen that for the first time in history a generation arises to confront a world without vital and instinctive art of any kind? Whatever there was seems to have been no more than the last dribblets of a once mighty torrent. Even these were to evaporate and before the century was more than a fourth spent were to vanish leaving only a dry vacancy behind, that shortly was to be filled by the crude barbarities that in England are called Victorian.

This arresting phenomenon had its fullest expression in architecture which, to the lowest levels of the banal in all Europe, in England and America achieved absolute and hopeless ugliness; it was here not the negative badness of incapacity but the positive badness of premeditated and accomplished ugliness. Painting, sculpture, drama, the art-crafts, liturgics, all were in nearly as bad case, and so they continued for a period of fifty-five years, for it was only in the 'eighties that individuals here and there became "convicted of sin" and started very feverish and generally artificial movements towards the recovery of a lost heritage.

Even more in religious than in secular art was this ominous condition observable. It was bad enough to have public and private art a derision in the sight of the gods, but it was doubly bad when formal religion was perfectly content with "the husks the swine did eat." Protestantism had consciously and deliberately rejected beauty and it was not surprising that from its buildings to its liturgy, ceremonial and music, it should be frankly and explicitly without beauty or art of any kind, but the Catholic Church had never taken any such action, formal or otherwise. It still invoked the aid of architecture, painting, sculpture, liturgics and all the art-crafts without exception, as freely as it always had done, and yet in varying degrees from Spain at the best, through the medial stages of France, Italy and Southern Germany, to the United States and Canada at the worst, it had sunk into the same slough of despond as Protestantism and secular society, and had even out-distanced these in the depths of its immersion, partly because, particularly in America, its actual products and practices were intrinsically worse, partly because contrast with its own nature and professions and the unclouded history of its achievements for fifteen hundred years made its contemporary presentment seem even worse than it was, were such a thing possible.

In the Dark Ages of Western Europe, from A.D. 500 to 1000, culture was at a sufficiently low ebb except for the Carolingian episode, Ireland and Moorish Spain, but even then the arts, including architecture, while crude and illiterate compared with what went before and followed after, showed a real desire for beauty and a pathetic struggle to accomplish this even with more than limited means and in spite of an inevitable consciousness of inferiority. The dark ages of the nineteenth century were entirely different. There was no suffering from an inferiority complex, but rather a self-assurance that was the worse for having no foundation. All the old art of Christianity was scorned, there was no searching for the best artists or craftsmen (after all the search would have been fruitless, but one could wish the effort had been made) and with rare exceptions, as when the Church got hold of the elder Pugin in England or Renwick in America, the most incompetent tyros were chosen or accepted rather than those a shade less futile in their ideas and accomplishments. It is true to say that Catholic art, particularly in the United States and Canada, reached the lowest point achieved by any art, religious or secular, within the historic period.

I feel justified in saying this, which is no more than the truth, because after all the badness of nineteenth-century Catholic art was worse than secular art only in degree and because during the last few years there have come clear evidences of the beginnings of a great change that may mean a definite recovery.

The start was made in England, back in the middle of the last century when the Catholic movement in the Established Church first began definitely to break away from the Protestant inheritance. It was part of a larger movement towards the recovery of Mediævalism, or at least a recognition of its permanent importance in Christian society. Something of the same nature was working in France and Germany, but here it was in a measure counteracted and delayed by the social and political democratic movements of the time, and it was in England that it had its earliest and most concrete expression. Return to Mediæval forms in architecture was one of the most notable and lasting, because the elder Pugin, a Catholic royalist refugee from the Revolution, was ready and able to help on the work. He was the first of a long and brilliant line of competent architects who in two generations have not only transformed church building in England, raising it to a higher point than it had known in three centuries, but their influence has extended far beyond the Anglican Communion where it originated, until it has found its way into many of the Protestant denominations and has at last been accepted by the Catholic Church in England and America and has seemingly turned the tide, so far at least as these countries are concerned.

Curiously enough, the tradition of Catholic architecture had been maintained in the English Church and therefore in the Episcopal Church in America, longer than anywhere else, and even in the nineteenth century the work was less bad than elsewhere. After Pugin the influence of Ruskin and Morris, together with that of the curious Pre-Raphaelite movement, began to infect other departments of religious art, and while neither great painting nor great sculpture has as yet appeared, the art-crafts have been completely revitalised. At first it was all pretty archæological and premeditated, but in the last twenty years it has grown more genuine and spontaneous, until now it has a life and a reality that are almost convincing. Of course, it is fostered and encouraged by the extraordinary recrudescence of interest in all Mediæval matters and the renewed admiration for Mediæval contributions in philosophy, economics, politics, as well as art of all kinds and the Catholic religion itself. Certainly this new religious art is not the expression of an universal impulse, it only voices a growing force that is slowly extending from the few to the many. Thus far its territorial field is limited, for the Continental tendency, that once paralleled that in England, has suddenly been wholly blocked, so far as art-expression is concerned, by the modernist mania which is the nemesis of vital art, and with which the Church has, or should have, no commerce.

This modernist movement has a certain plausibility, indeed in a sense it is a healthy sign, for ugly as it is in its products and handicapped by the allegiance of all the crack-brained and incompetent tyros who, congenitally incapable of drawing or design or art-work of any kind, capitalise their incapacity by doing a little worse than God intended, it nevertheless stands on firm ground. Art of every kind, if it is vital, relates itself intimately to life, is, in point of fact, a sort of symbolical expression of that life, though of life in its highest and finest aspects. Now the last century has seen an almost complete transformation in society, in its mechanism, the tools with which it works, and in its motives, its mental processes and even its ethical standards. The material side of life experienced no very drastic changes, achieved no very important accessions between the reign of Nebuchadnezzar and that of Queen Victoria. Everything that conditions life to-day, in its material aspect, all those things that have made possible an amazing technological civilisation, are the product of a space of time within the memory of men not yet eighty years old. The reconstruction of the world is almost as complete as that which took place cataclysmically and in a strange secrecy some four thousand years before the Christian Era, drawing a line of demarkation between Neolithic man and the man of the historic period. Neither the Dorian invasions, the Fall of Rome, the Renaissance nor the French Revolution has marked essential transformations in society comparable with what has happened in our own time.

Certainly this great transformation should show itself through an adequate art, but as a matter of fact it did not for a very long period, and the old forms were used in the clumsiest sort of way, being arbitrarily imposed on an alien and unsympathetic base, as, for example, the earlier American "sky-scrapers" took the general form of a Mediæval church tower, of incredible dimensions, and were overlaid with "Gothic" detail produced by mechanical means. All the arts of the late nineteenth century, except music, were retrospective, archæological—romanticist, Pre-Raphaelite, neo-Gothic—and the attempt at an artistic revival after the sterility of the preceding century found itself involved in an almost complete artificiality.

"Modernism" tried logically to correct this, to create an art that fitted a technological, materialistic, de-spiritualised society, and in a way it succeeded. "Jazz" music, futurism in painting, cubism in sculpture, modernism in architecture, free verse—all these things relate themselves to contemporary life, and nowhere more intimately than in their severance from all precedent, their denial of any fundamental law, and their essential ugliness. The weak point in the whole thing was the assumption that there were no values existing other than the new ones created by modernist society. The old values, existing regardless of temporal change and from time immemorial, home, education, religion, these things and many others besides, were ignored as vital factors, with their own laws, their lasting traditions, their demand for a different artistic expression, and the attempt was made to involve them in an art, so to speak, which, however intimately it might relate itself to the new technological society, had nothing whatever to do with them.

This was particularly true of religion, and above all of Catholicism, for very evident reasons. The Catholic Faith rests on an immovable basis, it is not subject to the changes and vicissitudes of human society, however patient it may be of folly and weakness and unwisdom. Being the witness of revealed truth and the one continuous force in the midst of whirling eddies of chance and change, it can go only to a certain limit in its acceptance of whims and fashions. Its art, which is its visible manifestation, may be Constantinian, Byzantine, Lombard, Romanesque, Norman, Gothic, Renaissance, depending on race, temper, inclination of its adherents, but in its essentials, its fundamental principles, it is always the same, which is why it can have no part in the modernist art of the time which has cut the cord of continuity that reached unbroken from the art of 3000 B.C. through to the early Renaissance, and, though with ravelling threads and weakening strands, down to only a generation or two ago.

To use the forms of Catholic art, however distorted and desecrated, to express what we know as modernism, is foolish and illogical, but to use the forms of modernist art to express the Catholic Faith is not only foolish and illogical, it is sacrilegious as well.

The attempt is being made to force this by the protagonists of modern art, particularly in France, and in a few cases they have achieved the coöperation of the ecclesiastical authorities. There are an half-dozen churches in France, a few in Germany and thus far one only in the United States which are couched in this explicitly anti-Christian style, while in painting, sculpture, stained glass and metal work the infiltration has been more insidious and pervasive. It is so vicious a principle, so irrational in theory and so repellent in its results that we need, I think, have little fear that it will continue more than for a very brief space of time. The French churches to which I refer are not only offensive to the Catholic spirit and manifestly hideous, they are also laughable, and ridicule sometimes destroys where instinct and reason cannot correct.

This unfortunate and misleading episode can be considered no more than this. It represents the personal idiosyncrasy of an individual priest here and there and cannot be interpreted as expressing in any degree the tendency of the Catholic Church. It does not interrupt the steady progress in the recovery of good and significant art that is increasingly evident in England, some parts of Scandinavia and particularly in the United States. More than thirty years ago in England the lead of the Established Church was followed and as soon as Roman Catholic churches were needed and could be built, they came into existence and of as high a degree of excellence as held in the case of their Anglican rivals. This was largely due, from a professional standpoint, to three great Catholic architects, Bentley, Stokes and Sir Giles Scott. It can hardly be said that the other arts have followed suit in any comparable degree, the right sort of religious painting and sculpture being still far to seek, though stained glass has long held a high place and the arts of metal, wood-carving and embroidery as well.

In the United States the recovery is more striking because it is the result of so brief a space of time, while its achievements are equally great. Thirty years ago, Catholic art in this country was at the lowest level ever achieved in any time or place. Whether it was architecture, painting, sculpture, the artist-crafts, music or ceremonial it was all irredeemably bad, and the worst of the situation was that apparently no one cared. No bishop took the faintest interest in the matter, no priest, no member of any religious order. Apparently they all liked what they got and thought it good. It was quite on a level with current Methodist and Baptist practice, in some respects even worse, since the opportunities were greater, while the justification that could be urged in the case of Protestant work could not hold here. A generation has seen an amazing change. While in Canada the worst traditions and practices still largely obtain, partly because of the French affiliations of the Church (no French architect for three centuries has had the faintest idea what constituted the art of Christianity) in the United States, Catholic architecture, largely at the instigation of men like John Comes and C. D. Maginnis (both Catholics) has taken almost the foremost place, certainly comparable with that of the Episcopal Church which for so long stood in the lead, and the Presbyterian, which has recently shown the highest ideals and demanded the best results. Moreover, many members of the hierarchy, together with innumerable priests and members of religious orders, now take the keenest interest in all matters pertaining to Christian art, and while here, as in England, the other arts lag behind architecture, the demand for these has made itself audible and there are signs that they may shortly develop.

In a word then, the dark decades that followed the failure of the Renaissance in the eighteenth century seem to have passed. There is no sign yet of recovery in the Latin countries and only sporadic cases in Teutonic and Scandinavian lands, while France is exerting a positive influence towards evil that is far worse than the ignorant indifference that has elsewhere already been overcome. The soundness and vitality of contemporary Catholic work in England and the United States is the great encouraging sign and the results already achieved are so convincing and stimulating there can be little doubt that they are destined ultimately to prevail throughout the Catholic world.

CHAPTER IX

Art which came into being under the impulse of religion and for its service; that was revivified by Christianity and given a new content; that was fostered and used by the Catholic Church for more than a thousand years, and that found in this service its greatest opportunities and through this produced its greatest works, has now through a process of nearly three centuries, became thoroughly secularised and is no longer "the handmaid of religion." In one respect this is a good thing and not to be rejected. Since religious sense, whether Catholic or Protestant, is now, for the moment, an attribute of only a minority, art, which is a part of man's birthright, can no longer be sought through the material channels of religion and it is only fair that it should exist, and be fostered in the secular sphere, for, wholly apart from religious considerations, a society that is without art may possibly be civilised, but it is certainly deficient in the higher quality of culture, while it lacks one of the important factors of joy.

In this process of secularisation, as I have said, the positive gain has been balanced by an equally positive loss, and that is the almost total disappearance of that art religion can use for its own expression and stimulation. For two hundred years, partly of necessity, partly by its own fault, the Catholic Church was wholly cut off from the use and enjoyment of art of any kind except that which had been preserved from earlier centuries, and even this generally failed of any large measure of appreciation. Now when the need is again felt and there is some revival of the sense of beauty—not only in itself but as a first test of values—the whole thing must be built up anew for the cord of continuity has snapped, just as it did in Western Europe during the first Dark Ages that followed the Fall of Rome. What, in the premises, is the duty, and what may be the function, of the Catholic Church?

It seems to me the answer is reasonably clear. The Church must *consciously* resume the position she once more or less unconsciously held as the creator, patron and protector of the arts, at least in so far as they enter into her service. It is not enough that the Church should maintain an attitude of amiable receptivity, accepting what art is brought to her, even if it is the best of the time. In this connection it is necessary to recognise two facts. First, that our technological civilisation not only does not and cannot furnish a soil congenial to the development of art of any kind while it tends increasingly to produce a spiritual and material environment that is distinctly unfavourable and even hostile. Second, that in no school, studio or atelier to-day (with the possible exception of the Académie de Saint-Luc in Belgium) is there any training or instruction in any form of religious art, nor is there even any consciousness that religion exists and is a factor in society, or that churches are even built and embellished to-day. Because of this it is useless to expect from contemporary schools, admirable as they may be along their own lines (and there are, for example, no better architectural schools in the world, within their own limitations, than there are in the United States) the slightest chance of gaining acceptable artists or the least coöperation in fostering them and rendering them competent practitioners. At the best such practice as is given comes under the head of "archæology," at the worst it is such as is given now in France where the same set of laws and theories are applied to the Catholic Church as are maintained in the case of aëroplanes, automobile manufacture, department stores, cinemas, apartment houses, industrial plants and all the other characteristic products of our technological civilisation.

Both these attitudes are bad, one in a negative, one in a positive way, and neither can contribute an iota to the task of rebuilding Christian art. Yet the need is imperative, the demand clamorous, and that this demand can be met is proved by the work of contemporary architects in England and the United States, the revival of the art of stained glass, the sporadic instances of sculptors and painters in several countries, and the vast reform that has been effected in music and liturgics in the last twenty-five years. Where these architects and other artists come from is a mystery, certainly not from the schools. They seem like biological mutations, appearing suddenly, and without traceable parentage. Like these biological "sports," however, they are few in number and need careful nurture to prevent reversion to type. This fostering care is the first duty of the Church: to seek out and find these rare geniuses who appear like strange survivals from the old days of Catholic society, and to use them when found, accepting no inferior substitute engendered by doctrinaire schools or commercial "mass production."

This, however, is not enough. In spite of the astonishing phenomenon of the sudden appearance of a great number of young architects in the United States, competent and Catholic minded, at least so far as their professional work is concerned, it is scarcely safe to rely on the continuance of this "uncovenanted mercy of God." Moreover, there is no other country, not even England, that shows any similar phenomenon at the present time. It is true that there are there a few men of commanding genius, but the present professional tendency so far as schools and practice are concerned, is away from sound racial standards, averse to the vital art of Liverpool Cathedral for example, and almost exclusively towards the gravely misleading ways of France where, as also in Germany, there seems to be no one who grasps the ethos of Catholic art or is capable of interpreting it in any acceptable sense. The same is true of Italy and Spain, or seems to be, judging from minor examples, but of course here new churches are seldom built, so it may not be fair to judge. If one were to form an estimate on the basis of the preposterous church of the Holy Family in Barcelona, it would be more condemnatory than could hold elsewhere in Europe, but this abortive work of misdirected genius was after all the invention of one individual, now dead, while the thing itself stands desolate and abandoned in all its pathetic absurdity. In justice to Spain and to the Catholic Church, it must be assumed that the episode was outside both orbits and is now closed.

Even if one could count on an adequate and continuing supply of Catholic architects, there is still the question of the other arts. As I have said before, England and the United States have restored the art of stained glass, but elsewhere it is either dull and third-rate copying or as wrongheaded and poisonous as at its worst it is in France, Germany, Italy and Spain. Sculptors are few and far between; two or three in America, one of whom is an Englishman, one or two in France. In painting little enough in any country except, curiously enough, in the United States where there seems really the promise of something genuine and vital, and perhaps also among the Russian emigration. It is not a very encouraging prospect, yet it is dazzling compared with the conditions that held twenty-five years ago. What is the Church prepared to do, what can it do as matters stand?

Personally I am not fully persuaded of the value or effectiveness of formal training in the arts; the result of this sort of intensive education during the past hundred years is not encouraging. Art of all kinds ought to appear simultaneously (it always did) and as the result of a stimulating and crescent culture. Lacking this, as is sufficiently proved by the artistic output of a century, and accepting the situation as definite, we are driven back on the only available substitute which is formal training and intensive education. Of course if we were to encounter a sudden and comprehensive religious awakening, with all the Christian world (and secular as well) turning Catholic, the problem would be solved by the second generation thereafter, but the contingency is remote, and therefore as I say we come back to formal and scholastic training as the only visible alternative.

It is useless to expect a change of heart on the part of any of the existing "schools of fine arts" that would result even in a recognition of the existence of religion or a willingness to meet its needs and satisfy its demands. They are and always have been established on the basis of pre-Christian art and they could hardly change their basic theory and their resulting technical method. At the present time they are going on from this, and logically, to an attempted expression of our present technological civilisation, and doing it very well. They can only be left to do their own chosen work, but since there is now a new and growing consciousness on the part of the Christian minority, both Catholic and Protestant, of the vital necessity of art of every sort, I see nothing for it but the establishing of other schools founded on a basis that will guarantee, as far as possible, the training that may, by the grace of God, result in the production of specifically Christian art. As I have already indicated, this sort of thing is even now being done, though in a very small way. The Académie de Saint-Luc in Belgium, conducted by the Christian Brothers, and Notre Dame University in America are the only two I know of and the latter deals with architecture alone. The supply is hardly adequate. It seems to me, therefore, and I think the proposal is pertinent to this inquiry, that it is the manifest duty of the Catholic

Church to enter seriously into the fostering of all the branches of Christian art through the establishment in various parts of Europe and America, of schools and studios and workshops where the teaching is specifically Christian and founded on strictly Catholic principles. Something of the sort has already been begun in the case of music, but must the work stop here? There are other arts in even worse case and where the demand is even greater. Will not the present Sovereign Pontiff continue the work of his illustrious predecessor and take action towards the restoration of the other arts of architecture, painting, sculpture and all the artist-crafts of Christendom?

It is easy to envisage such a school. It would be established in no great capital of modernism such as Rome, Madrid, Paris, Berlin, London or New York, but in some small city still redolent of old art and environed in beauty—Siena, Segovia, Rouen, Ulm, Oxford. It would be a Catholic school under a very simple semi-monastic Rule. All the arts would be united, major arts including music and minor arts down to the simplest handicrafts. It might even be organised more or less on a guild basis, with the students proceeding from apprentices to journeymen and so to masters, the "masterpiece" of each being some concrete contribution to the architecture and the embellishment of the chapel and other buildings of the school. We have seen recently in America the giving of five million dollars for the establishing in a great university of a "School of Business Administration" and other millions each year, uncounted millions, are expended on innumerable other schools of applied science. A tithe of these vast sums would build, equip and maintain a school of Christian art in every country in Europe and in the United States and Canada. If our sense of comparative values were not entirely lost such schools would be in operation within a decade.

But whether such a scheme as this is possible or not, there is another, more facile of achievement, that should certainly be put in practice, and that is some measure of proper instruction in Christian art, in secular colleges and particularly in theological seminaries. It would do little good to train artists of any sort were they not to find adequate appreciation and patronage. At present there is, not only amongst the clergy but in the public at large, a deplorable indifference to the claims of art, together with a wide inability to recognise its function as an integral part of the ecclesiastical organism. It is, I conceive, the duty of the Church to see that this feature is added to the curriculum of institutions of higher learning and that seminarians are given adequate instruction in the history and philosophy of art, and if possible some training in taste and in the discriminating between good art and bad.

It is unfortunate that this should be necessary; it is indeed a reflection on the nature and quality of our civilisation, for such a thing was never needed before, but the fact remains that, whatever its implications, it is needed now and must be provided if the Catholic Church is to recover its old position as the instigator, the patron and the guardian of good art. Her record is supreme and untarnished for nearly fifteen hundred years; for the last three centuries it has been, not especially discreditable, but to all intents and purposes a blank. With her rapidly gaining power over the souls of men it is imperative that she should reassume her lost leadership, not only on account of the added energy that so will accrue to her efforts towards the spiritual harmony of Christendom but as well for the immeasurable benefit of all peoples.

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